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AMAR CHITRA KATHA

No. 414 Rs. 6/-

MAHATMA GANDHI
(THE EARLY DAYS)

IBH

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

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No. 414 June 1, 1989
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Editor
ANANT PAI

Associate Editor
Margie Sastry

Script
Gayatri Madan Dutt

Revised By:
Prof. C.N. Patel

Artworks
Souren Roy

Art Superintendent
Chandrakant Rane

Advertisement Manager
M. Subramanian

Reference Assistance
Shobha Rao

*

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MAHATMA GANDHI
PART—1

"I never saw Gandhi... I do not know his language. I never set foot in his country and yet, I feel the same sorrow as if I had lost someone near and dear," wrote the Frenchman Leon Blum, when he heard that the Mahatma was dead.

Millions, not only in India but the world over, felt the same way, for Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) has been the only politician in modern history who strove to rule not men, but the hearts of men.

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WORDS OF THE MAHATMA

"... for me, the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and therefore of humanity".

"... I recognise no God except the God that is to be found in the hearts of the dumb millions."

"... How can I talk of God to the millions who have to go without two meals a day? To them, God can only appear as bread and butter."

"... If I have to be reborn, I should be born an untouchable so that I may share their sorrows, sufferings and the affronts levelled at them, in order that I may endeavour to free myself and them from that miserable condition."

"... I may live without air and water, but not without him. You may pluck out my eyes, but that will not kill me. You may chop off my nose, but that will not kill me. But blast my belief in God and I am dead".

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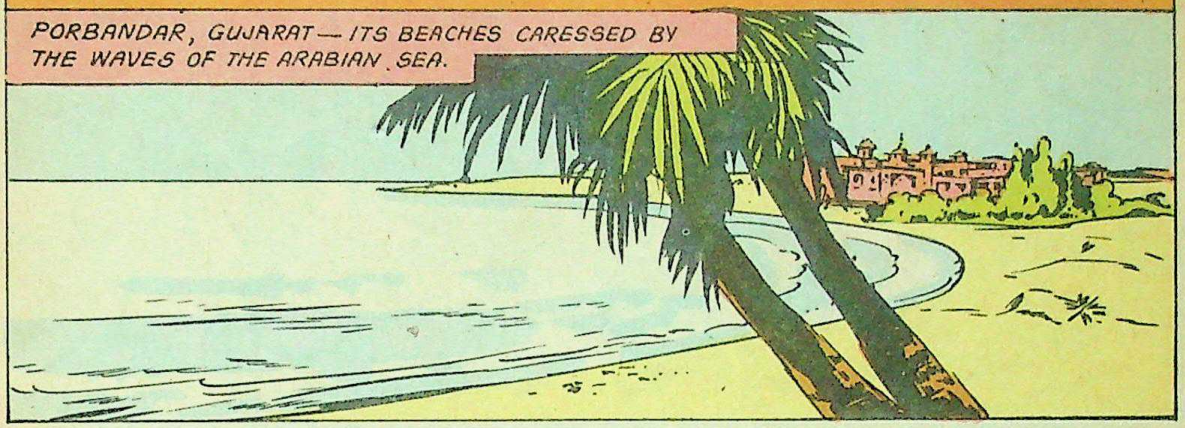
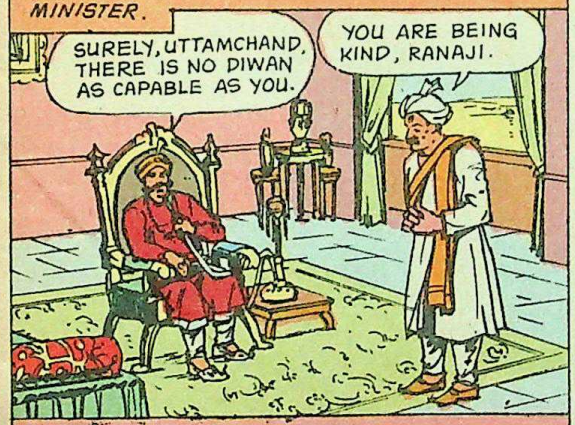
MAHATMA GANDHI-1 (The early days)

PORBANDAR, GUJARAT — ITS BEACHES CARESSED BY THE WAVES OF THE ARABIAN SEA.



IT WAS ABOUT THE 1820s. KHIMOJI, RANA OF PORBANDAR, WAS TALKING TO HIS PRIME MINISTER.



THE PRAISE WAS WELL DESERVED, FOR UTTAMCHAND SERVED HIS RULER DEVOTEDLY.

BUT, AFTER THE RANA'S DEATH, UTTAMCHAND DID NOT RECEIVE THE SAME TREATMENT FROM THE SUCCESSOR, AND HE FELT UNHAPPY.

LATER, INVITED BY THE NAWAB OF JUNAGADH, UTTAMCHAND WENT TO HIS COURT TO PAY HIS RESPECTS. HE SALUTED THE NAWAB WITH HIS LEFT HAND.

SUCH WAS THE TRUTHFULNESS, SENSE OF LOYALTY AND COURAGE OF UTTAMCHAND. HE WAS THE GRANDFATHER OF MOHANDAS GANDHI.

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* IN JUNAGADH STATE

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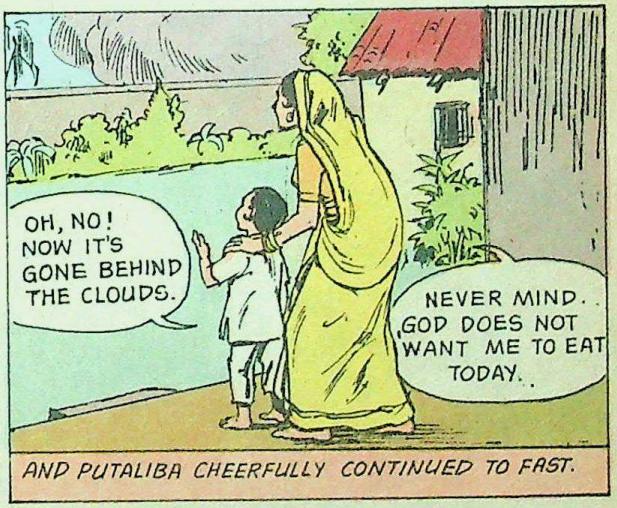
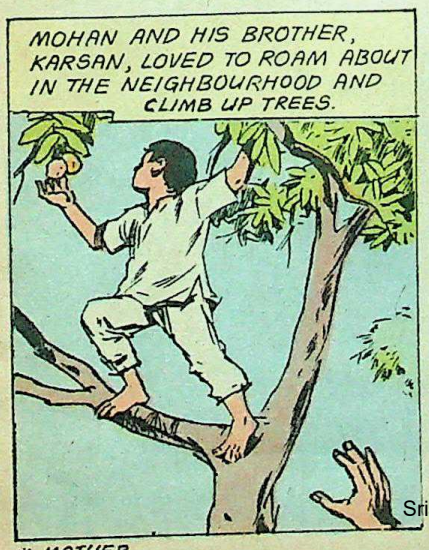
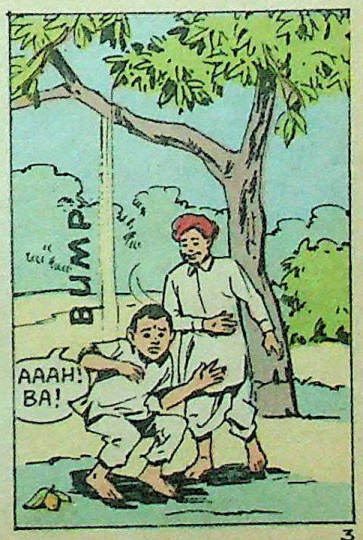
MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI WAS BORN IN A THREE-STOREY HOUSE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF PORBANDAR. KARAMCHAND WAS, DIWAN OF PORBANDAR FOR MANY YEARS, AND LATER HE WENT OVER TO RAJKOT. MOHAN'S MOTHER WAS PUTALIBA.







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* MOTHER

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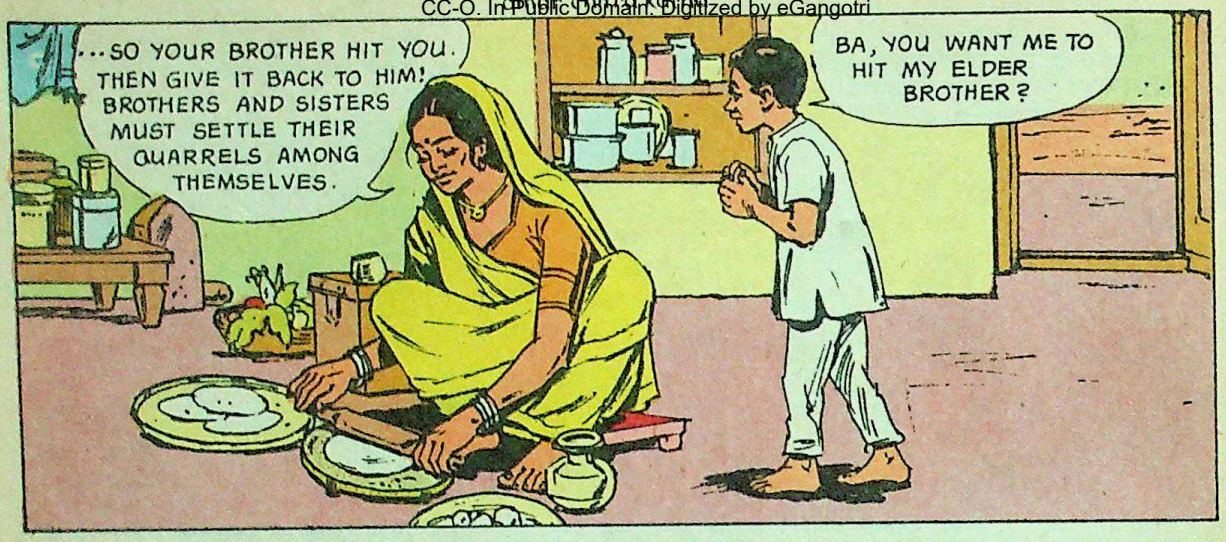

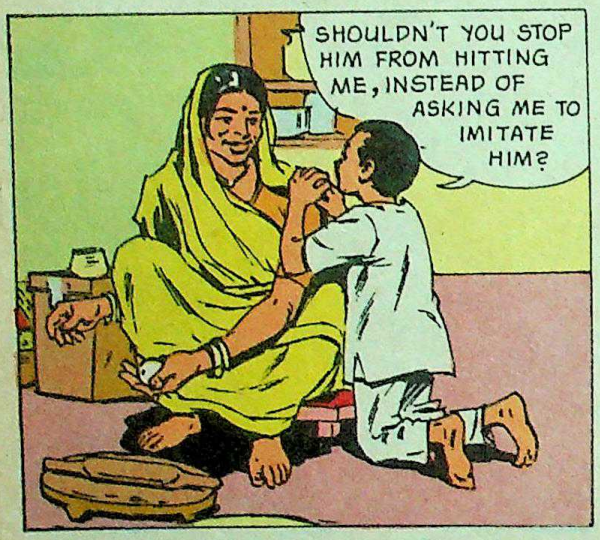

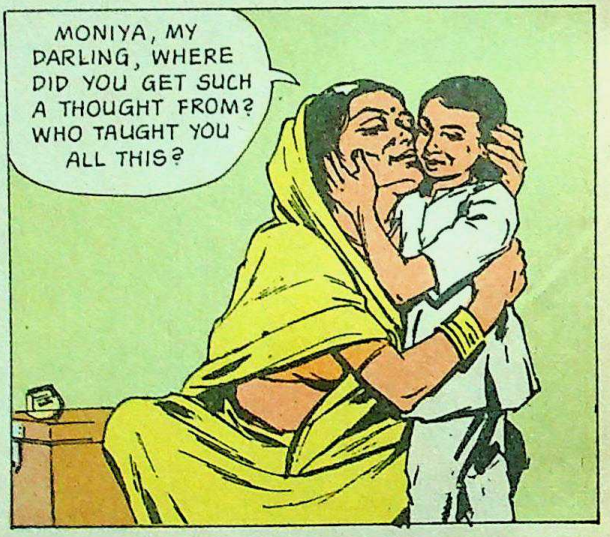

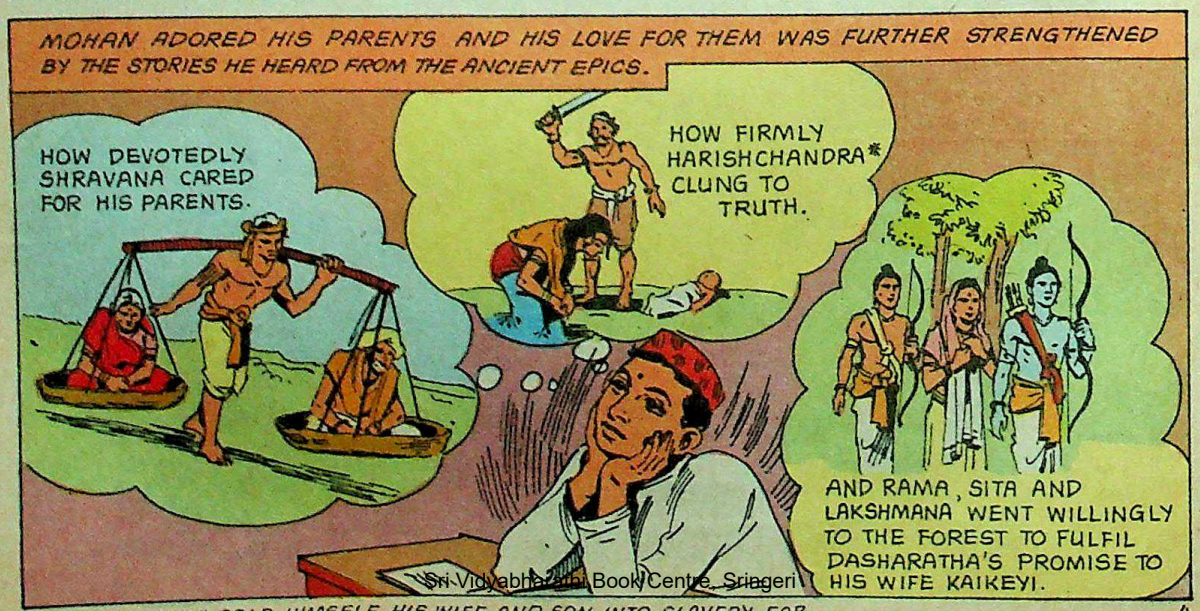

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* THE KING WHO SOLD HIMSELF, HIS WIFE AND SON INTO SLAVERY FOR THE SAKE OF TRUTH.

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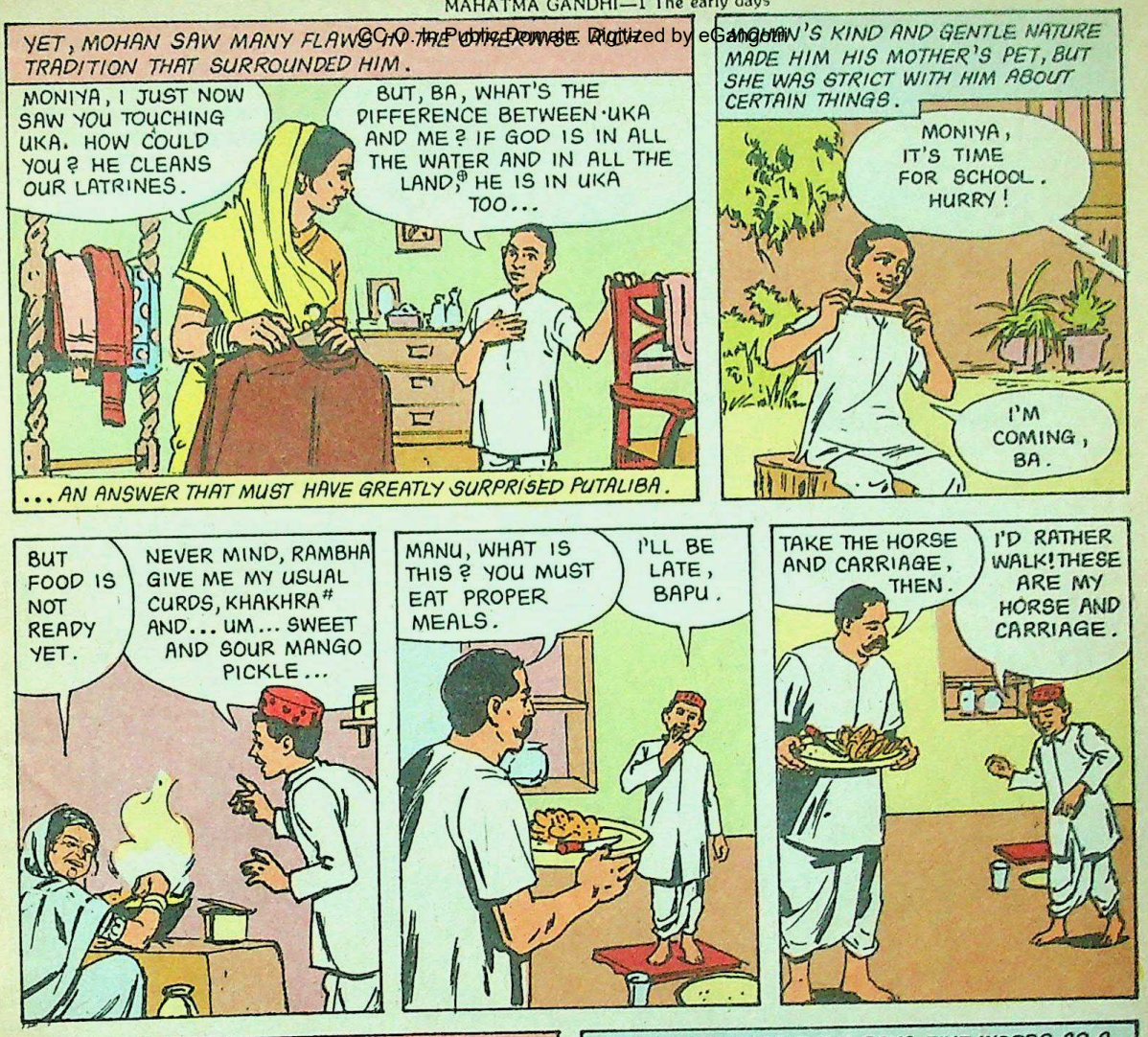

⊕ 'JALE VISHNUH, STHALE VISHNUH'— A VERSE FROM THE VISHNU POOJA, OFTEN CHANTED IN THE GANDHI HOUSEHOLD. # UNLEAVENED BREAD ROUNDS BAKED CRISP.

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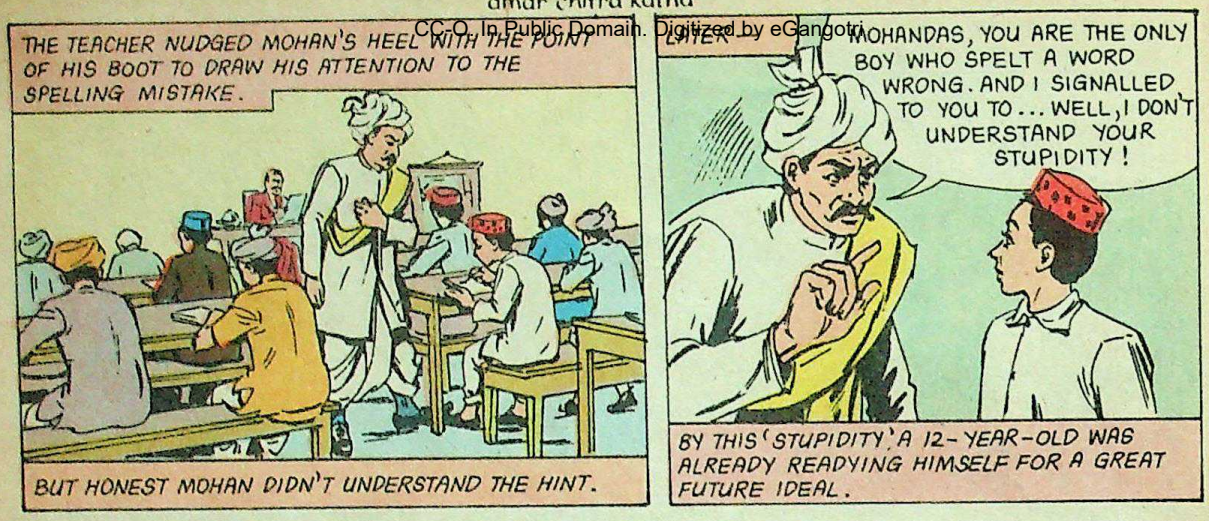

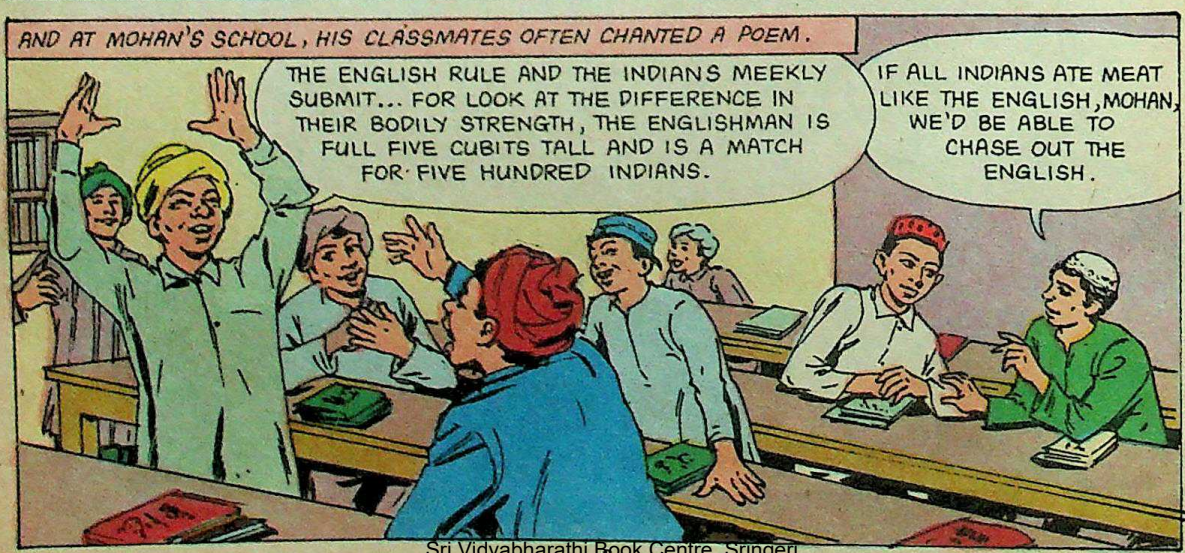

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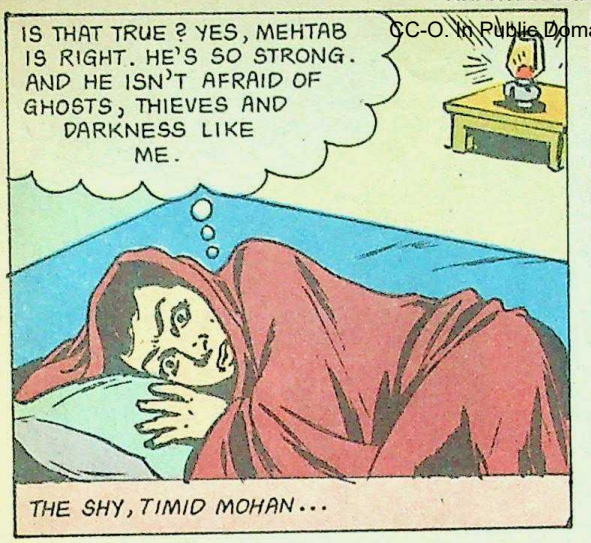

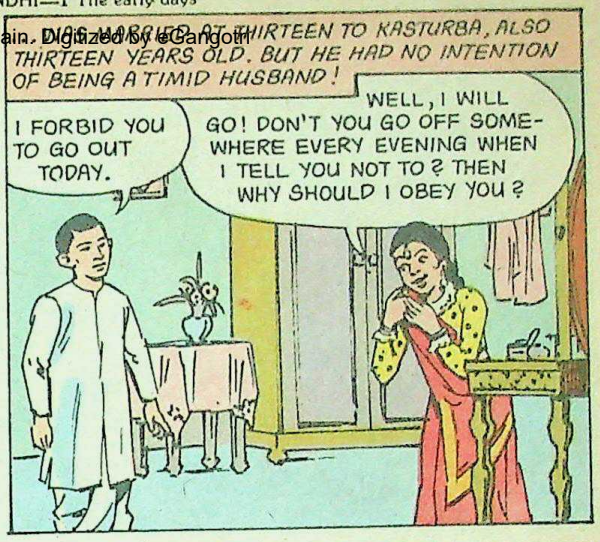

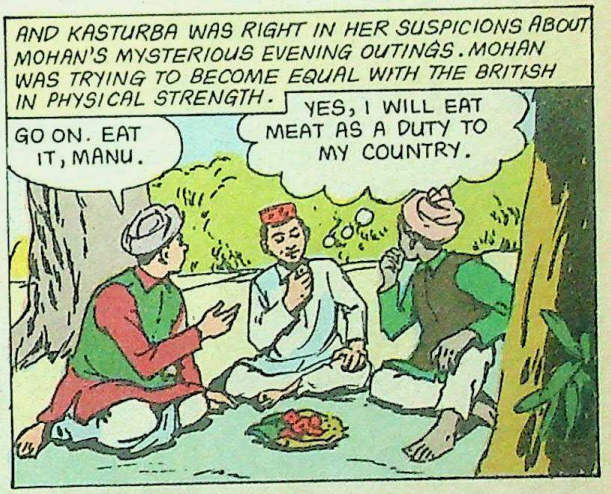

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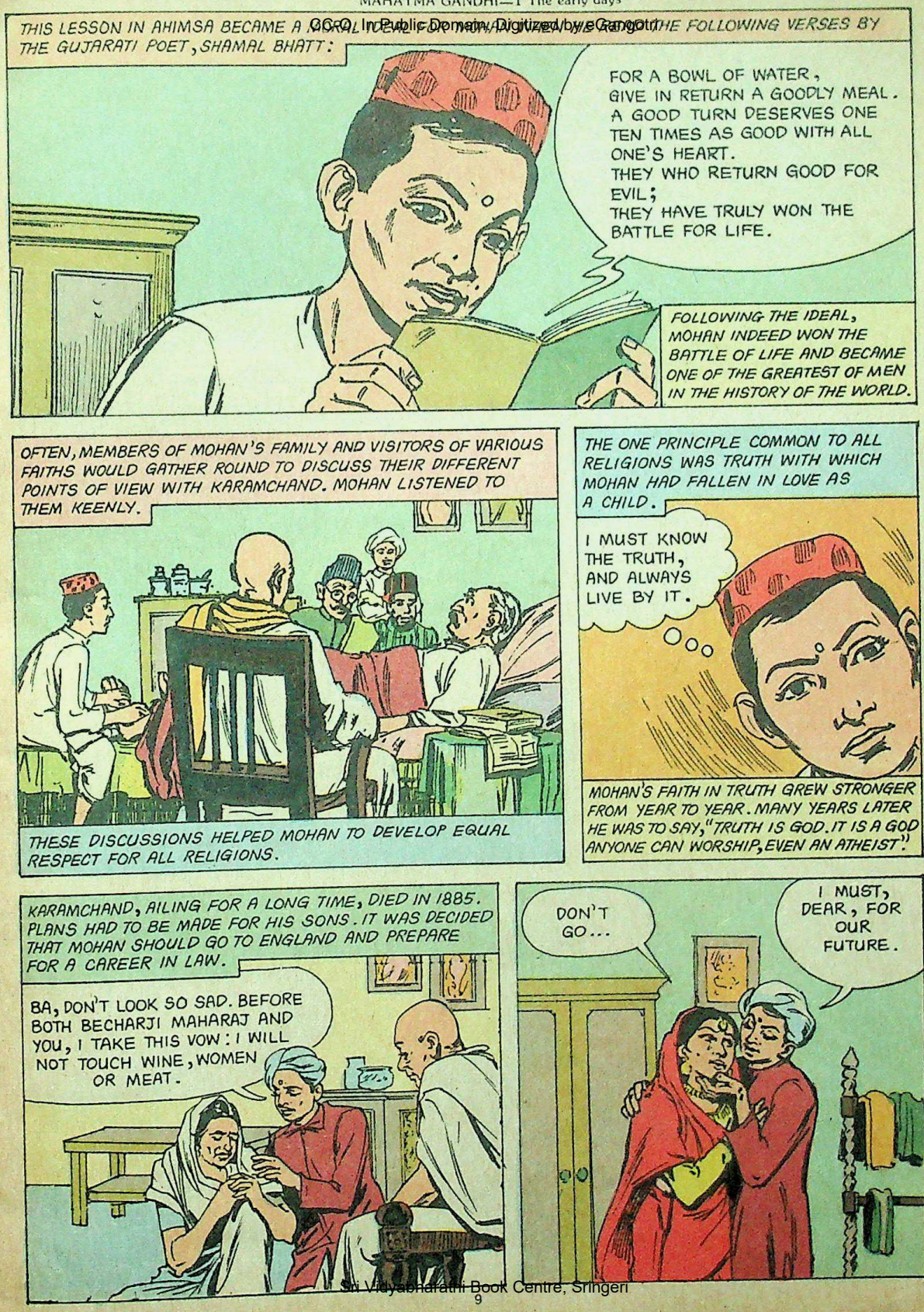

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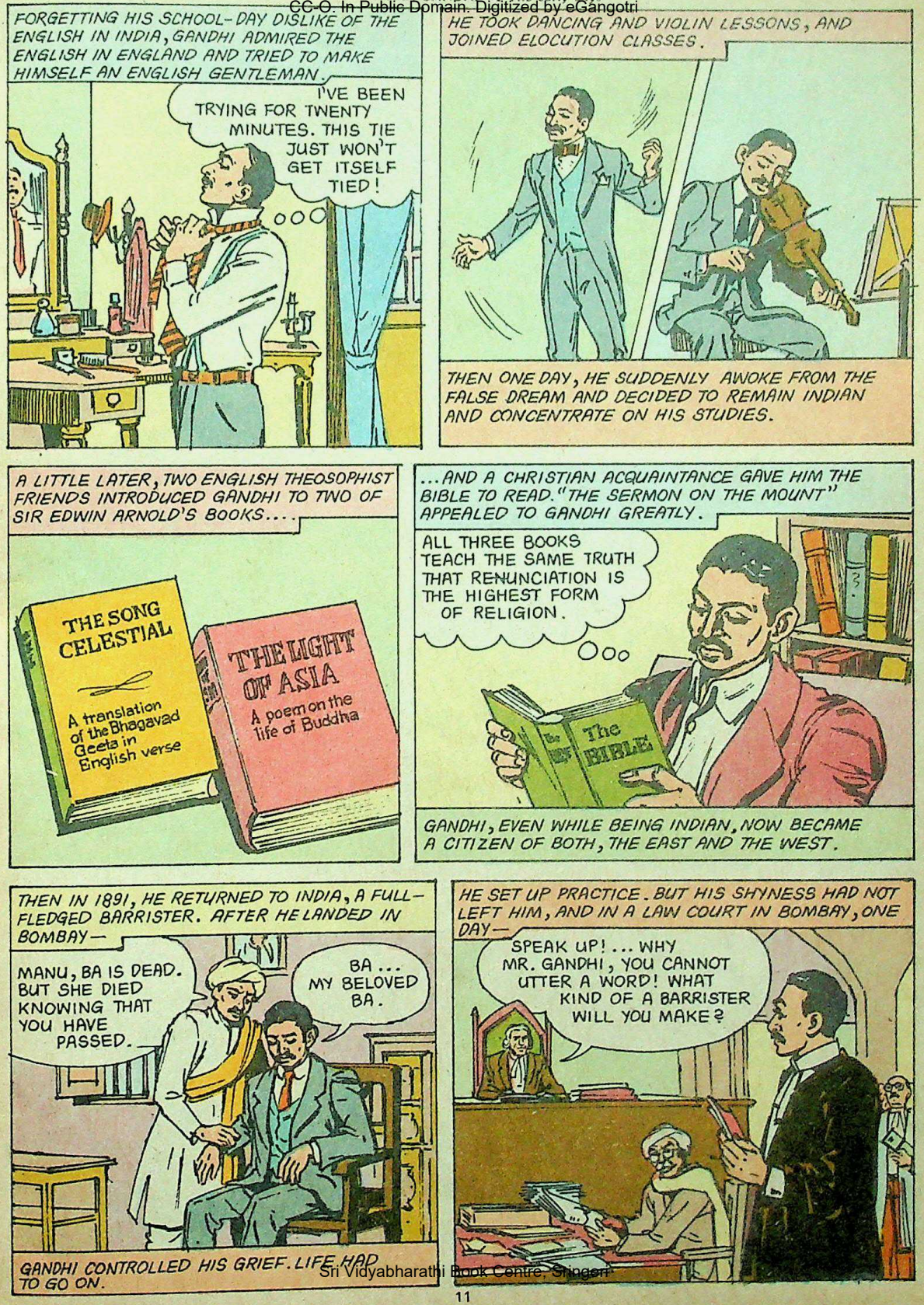

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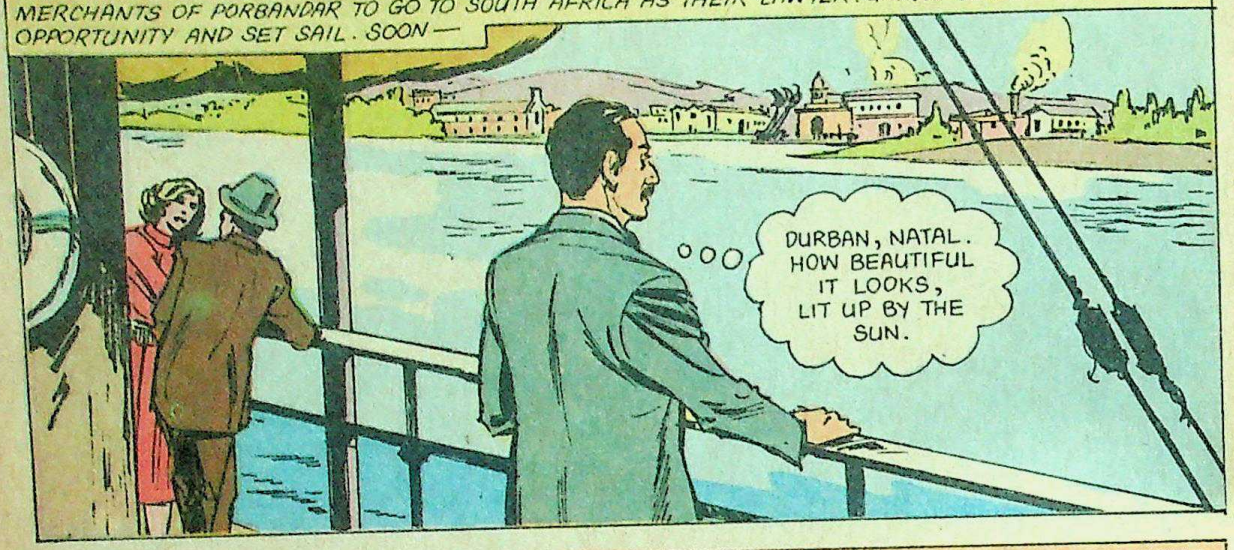
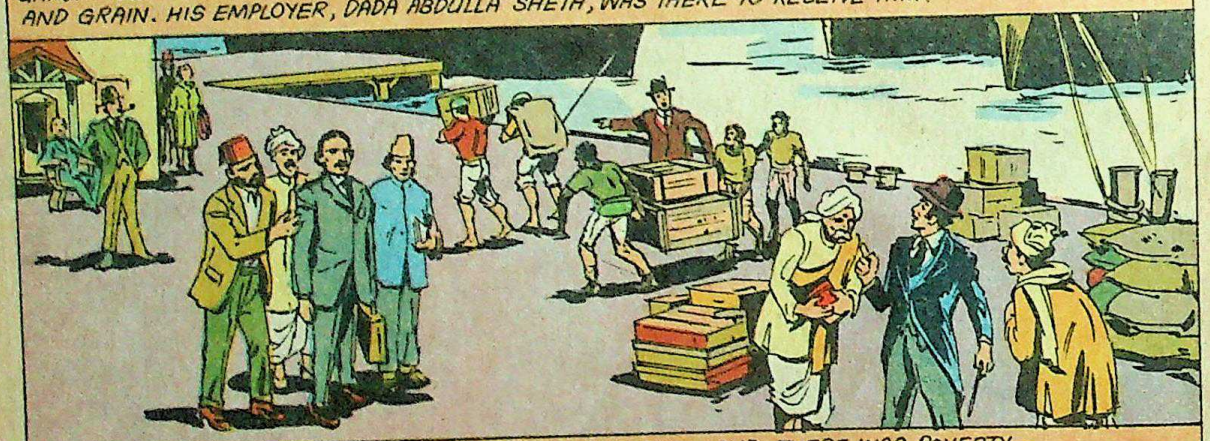
FOR ALMOST TWO YEARS, GANDHI GOT NO WORK. THEN IN 1893, THERE CAME AN OFFER FROM SOME MERCHANTS OF PORBANDAR TO GO TO SOUTH AFRICA AS THEIR LAWYER. GANDHI SEIZED THE OPPORTUNITY AND SET SAIL. SOON—



GANDHI SET FOOT IN THIS COUNTRY OF COALMINES AND SUGAR PLANTATIONS; OF BOUNTIFUL FRUIT AND GRAIN. HIS EMPLOYER, DADA ABDULLA SHETH, WAS THERE TO RECEIVE HIM.



ONE LOOK TOLD GANDHI THE WHOLE STORY. IN THIS RICH LAND, THERE WAS POVERTY— THE POVERTY OF HUMANENESS.

IN THE SECOND WEEK AFTER HIS ARRIVAL, HE TRAVELLED ON WORK TO PRETORIA, CAPITAL CITY OF THE TRANSVAAL. AND HE CAME FACE TO FACE WITH THE INHUMANITY OF SOUTH AFRICA.

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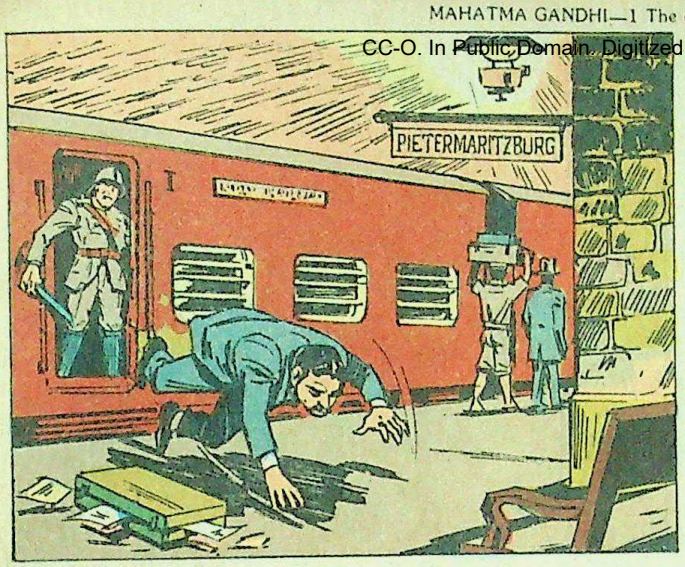


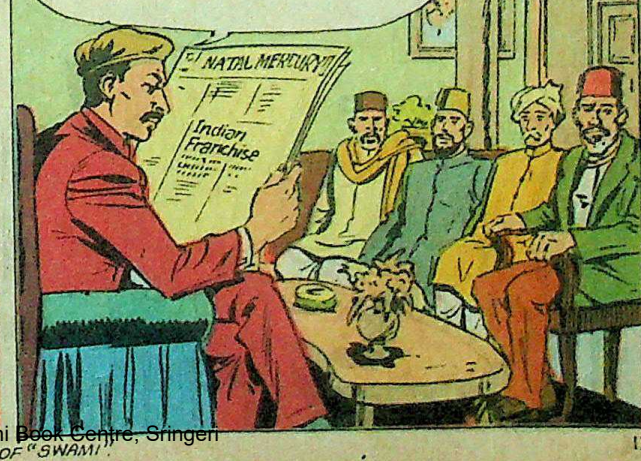
GANDHI SAT IN THE DARK WAITING ROOM, NOT ONLY SHIVERING WITH COLD, BUT ALSO TREMBLING WITH HUMILIATION.

THE EXPERIENCES CAME THICK AND FAST. IN THE TRANSVAAL, COLOUR PREJUDICE WAS EVEN STRONGER THAN IN NATAL.

AT NIGHT, GANDHI ARRIVED AT JOHANNESBURG. HE WENT TO A HOTEL.

IN PRETORIA, HE WAS KICKED FOR WALKING ON THE FOOTPATH IN FRONT OF PRESIDENT KRUGER'S HOUSE.

GANDHI GOT TOGETHER A GROUP OF INDIAN MERCHANTS IN PRETORIA. THEY MET OFTEN TO DISCUSS THEIR PROBLEMS. BUT GANDHI CONCENTRATED FIRST ON FINISHING THE LEGAL WORK HE HAD COME TO DO. HE SOON COMPLETED IT.



AND DURING THE PARTY, GANDHI SAW IT!

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* CONTEMPTUOUS TERM FOR INDIANS – A CORRUPTION OF "SWAMI".

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IT WAS AS IF ALL THE INSULTS HE AND THE INDIAN COMMUNITY SUFFERED STOOD TELESCOPED IN THAT SMALL CORNER OF THE NEWSPAPER.

TAKING AWAY OUR VOTING RIGHTS STRIKES AT THE ROOT OF OUR SELF-RESPECT. YOU MUST FIGHT IT.

GANDHIBHAI, WE ARE UNEDUCATED MEN. WHAT DO WE UNDERSTAND OF THESE MATTERS? BUT IF YOU COULD STAY BACK AND GUIDE US, WE WILL FIGHT.

ALL RIGHT, I WILL DELAY MY DEPARTURE.

AH!... ALLAH IS GREAT AND MERCIFUL.

AND THE PARTY TRANSFORMED ITSELF INTO A PUBLIC COMMITTEE. A POLITE, BUT FIRM PETITION WAS DRAWN UP AND SENT TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

AND ON THE THIRD DAY OF THE READING OF THE BILL, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY HALL SAW A STRANGE RUSH-OF INDIANS- SUDDENLY CONSCIOUS OF THEIR RIGHTS.

MOST OF THE NEWSPAPERS JUSTIFIED THE BILL. THE 'NATAL MERCURY' WROTE —

THE ASIATIC IS A POLITICAL INFANT OF THE MOST BACKWARD TYPE. INDIANS ARE PARASITICAL. IT IS AN INJUSTICE TO GIVE THEM FRANCHISE AT ALL...

GANDHI REPLIED —

INDIANS COME OF ONE OF THE MOST CIVILISED RACES IN THE WORLD. THEY HAVE EXERCISED THE VOTE LONG BEFORE THE ENGLISH KNEW OF VOTING. NOTHING IS SO WELL ORGANISED AND SO ESSENTIALLY REPRESENTATIVE AS INDIAN VILLAGE COMMUNITY. AND THE INDIANS COMING HERE AS LABOURERS, FAR FROM BEING PARASITICAL, HAVE HELPED TO BUILD NATAL TO PROSPERITY.

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THE GOVERNMENT WAS ALARMED. A PROUD INDIAN VOICE HAD RAISED ITSELF. YET THE VOICE SPOKE SO JUSTLY AND WITHOUT AGGRESSIVENESS, THAT SOME PAPERS EVEN PRAISED IT.

NATAL MERCURY WROTE: WE MUST ADMIT THAT THE INDIANS MAKE OUT A VERY GOOD CASE FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW.

IN SPITE OF THIS, THE INDIANS, LED BY GANDHI, HAD TO CARRY ON A LONG-DRAWN-OUT STRUGGLE FOR THEIR RIGHTS. IN AUGUST 1894, THE NATAL INDIAN CONGRESS WAS BORN. ENCOURAGED FROM LONDON BY DADABHAI NAOROJI, GANDHI BEGAN HIS 20-YEAR WAR ON SOUTH AFRICAN RACISM.

AND WHEN GANDHI WENT TO INDIA TO BRING BACK HIS FAMILY, HE SPOKE AT MEETINGS TO INTEREST INDIANS IN THE CAUSE OF SOUTH AFRICAN INDIANS.

THEY TREAT US WITH CONTEMPT. SUBMISSION TO THESE INSULTS MEANS DEGRADATION.

GANDHI HAD NOT SAID ANYTHING IN INDIA THAT HE HAD NOT ALREADY SPOKEN OUT LOUD AND CLEAR IN SOUTH AFRICA. YET WHEN HE RETURNED TO DURBAN IN 1897 —

HOW DARE YOU CONDEMN US IN INDIA! TAKE THAT...

... AND THAT!

STOP IT! LEAVE THE POOR MAN ALONE!

THE POLICE SUPERINTENDENT'S WIFE, MRS. ALEXANDER, SHIELDED HIM FROM THE BLOWS.

THE POLICE ARRIVED AND MANAGED TO TAKE HIM TO HIS FRIEND PARSEE RUSTOMJI'S HOUSE, BUT THE CROWD FOLLOWED. SUPERINTENDENT ALEXANDER TRIED TO HUMOUR THE CROWD.

WE'LL HANG OLD GANDHI FROM THE SOUR APPLE TREE...

MEANWHILE, POLICE DETECTIVES, DRESSED AS INDIANS, SECRETLY ESCORTED GANDHI TO THE POLICE STATION.

MR. ESCOMBE, NATAL'S ATTORNEY-GENERAL, CAME TO SEE GANDHI.

YOU ARE BADLY WOUNDED. NAME YOUR ASSAILANTS. I WILL HAVE THEM ARRESTED AND PROSECUTED.

NO, I DON'T WANT TO PROSECUTE ANYONE. THEY ARE NOT TO BLAME. THEIR LEADERS AND A RACIST SOCIETY ARE TO BLAME.

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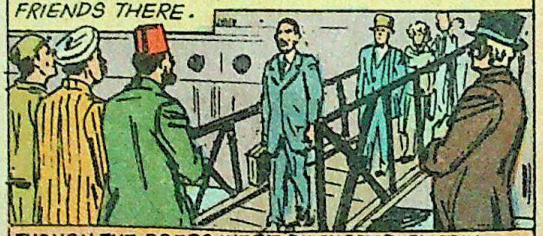
GANDHI CONTINUED HIS NON-AGGRESSIVE POLICY. HE EVEN FORMED AN INDIAN AMBULANCE CORPS DURING THE WAR IN 1899 BETWEEN ENGLAND AND THE BOER* COLONIES OF THE TRANSVAAL TO THE NORTH AND THE ORANGE FREE STATE TO THE WEST OF NATAL.

BY CARRYING THEIR WOUNDED FROM THE FIELD, WE WILL DEMONSTRATE TO THE ENGLISH THAT WE ARE ONE WITH THEM AND SO, ONE OF THEM...

... FOR GANDHI BELIEVED AT THIS TIME THAT THE BRITISH EMPIRE, WITH ALL ITS DEFECTS AND FAULTS, WAS ON THE WHOLE FOR THE GOOD OF MANKIND.

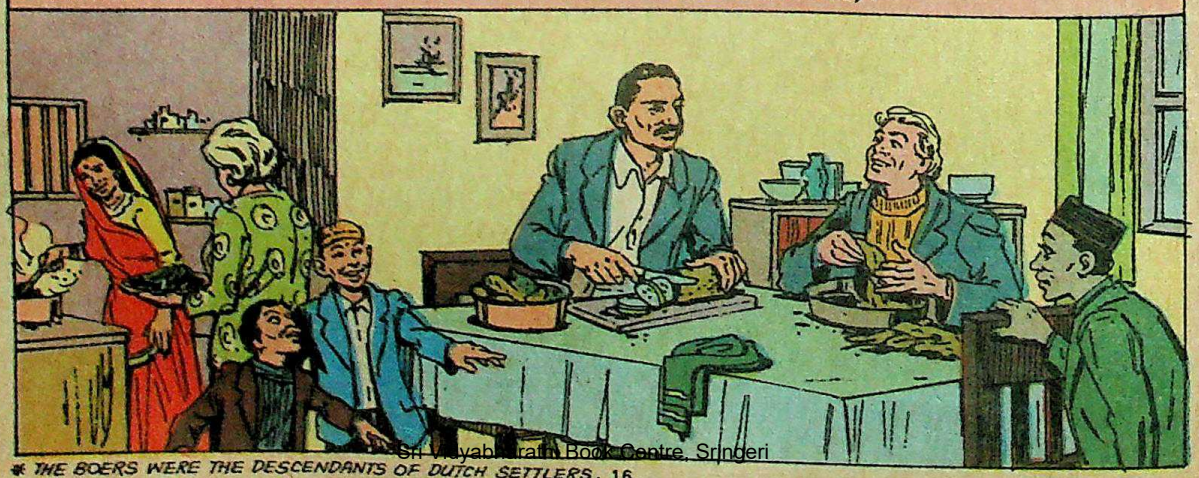
AFTER THE WAR, GANDHI RETURNED TO INDIA IN DECEMBER 1901, AND ATTENDED THE CONGRESS SESSION IN CALCUTTA. HE STAYED WITH GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE AND BECAME A CLOSE FRIEND AND FOLLOWER OF HIS.

BEFORE THE YEAR 1902 WAS OUT, GANDHI WAS RECALLED TO SOUTH AFRICA BY HIS INDIAN FRIENDS THERE.



THOUGH THE BOERS WERE DEFEATED BY THE BRITISH, THE PREJUDICE AGAINST INDIANS REMAINED AS STRONG AS BEFORE AND THE BRITISH OFFICIALS, WHO RULED THE CONQUERED COLONIES, ENFORCED OLD LAWS AGAINST THE INDIANS MORE STRICTLY THAN THE FORMER BOER GOVERNMENT.

ON HIS RETURN, GANDHI SETTLED IN THE TRANSVAAL'S PREMIER CITY, JOHANNESBURG. IN HIS HOUSE HERE, LATER, HIS ENGLISH FRIEND HENRY POLAK, HIS SERVANT, AND INDIAN VISITORS, OFTEN LIVED TOGETHER WITH GANDHI'S OWN FAMILY AS MEMBERS OF A LARGE FAMILY.



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* THE BOERS WERE THE DESCENDANTS OF DUTCH SETTLERS.

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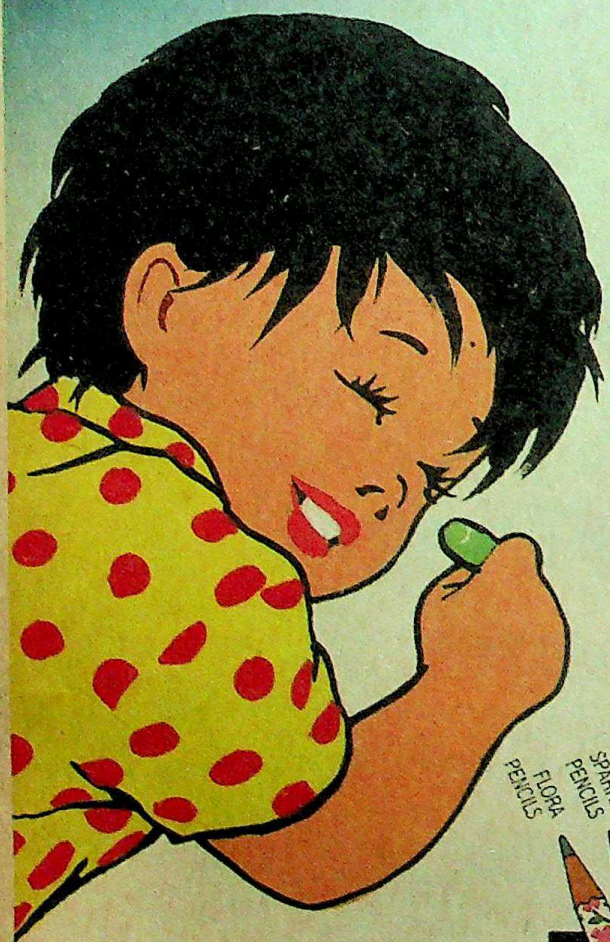

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VALMIKI'S RAMAYANA IS BELIEVED TO BE THE FIRST POETIC WORK WRITTEN IN SANSKRIT; IT IS, THEREFORE, REFERRED TO AS THE ADIKAVYA. IT IS SAID THAT BRAHMA ASSURED VALMIKI THAT "AS LONG AS THE MOUNTAINS STAND AND THE RIVERS FLOW, SO LONG SHALL THE RAMAYANA BE READ BY MEN."

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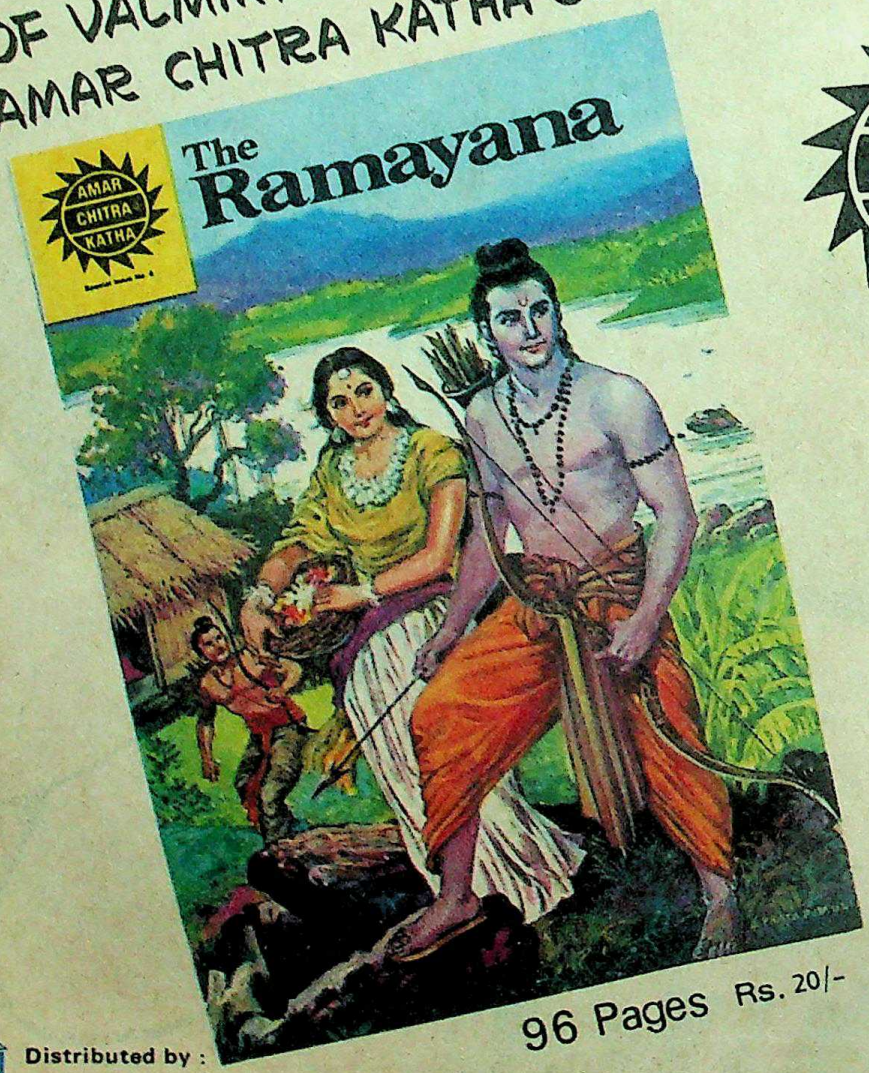

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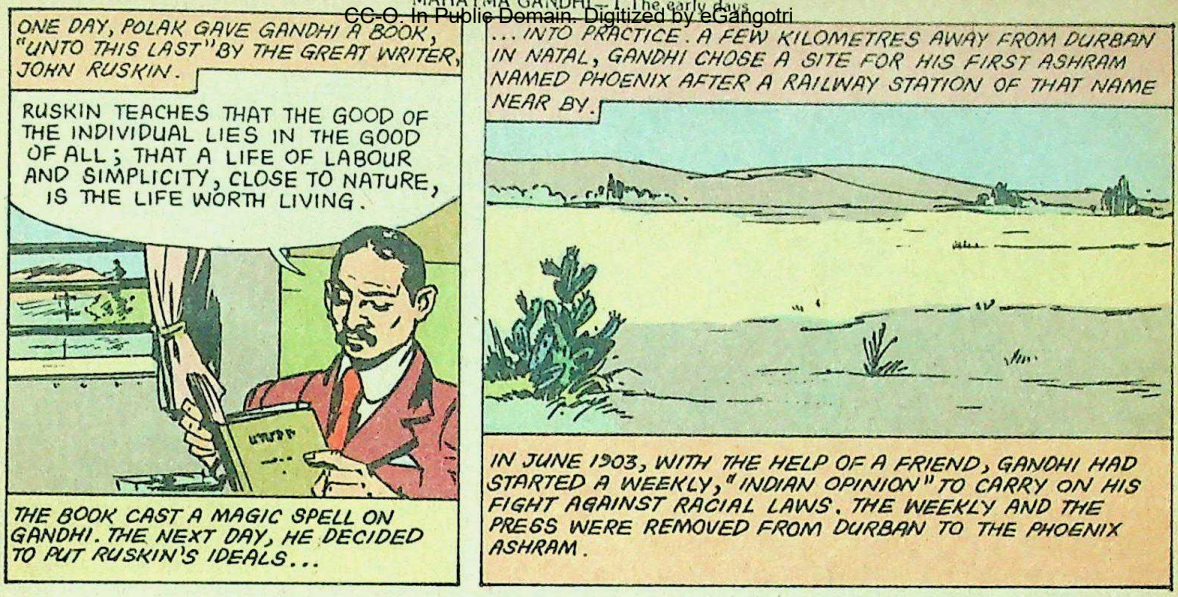

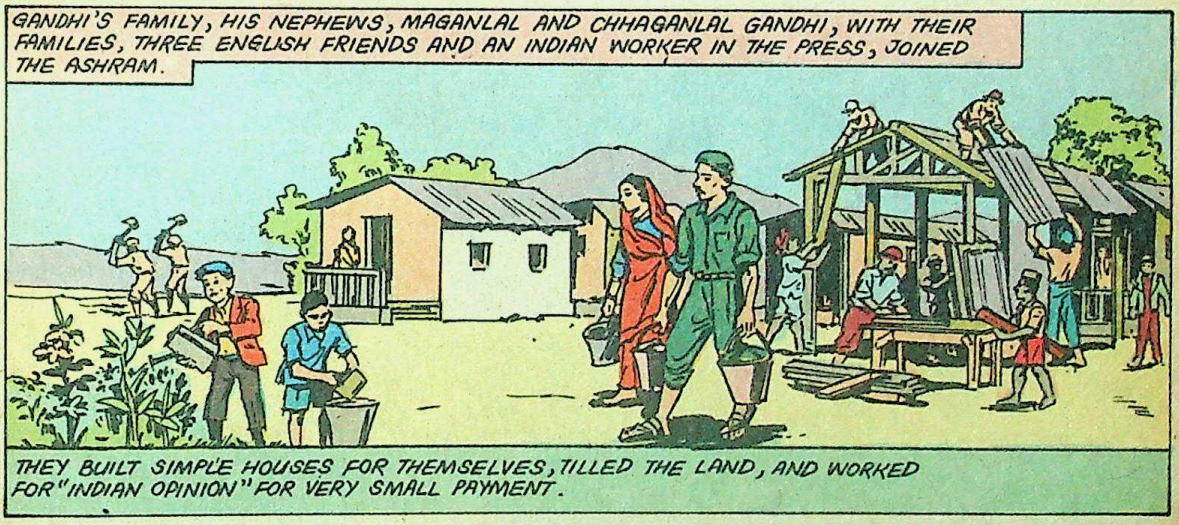

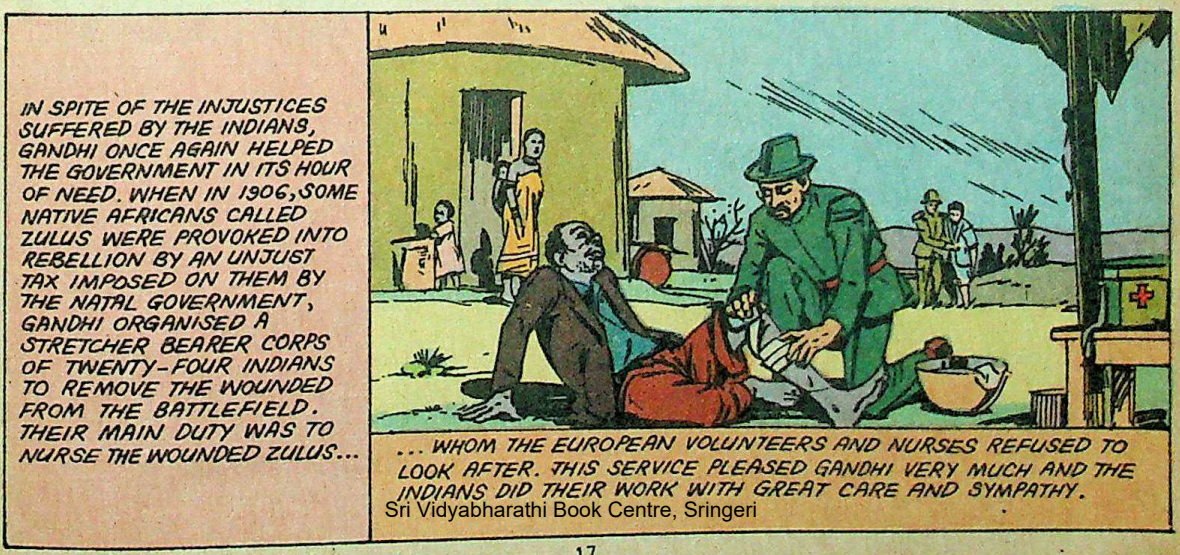

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THIS EXPERIENCE OF HUMANITARIAN SERVICE WAS A TURNING POINT IN GANDHI'S PERSONAL LIFE. AROUND THIS TIME HE REALISED THE NEED FOR SELF-DISCIPLINE.

I WILL HAVE MORE AND MORE OPPORTUNITIES OF RENDERING SUCH SERVICE. I CANNOT DO FULL JUSTICE TO THEM IF AT THE SAME TIME I GO AFTER PLEASURES, HAVE MORE CHILDREN AND THE PROBLEMS OF FAMILY LIFE TO LOOK AFTER.

AND SO, AFTER DISCUSSING THE IDEA WITH KASTURBA, GANDHI TOOK THE VOW OF COMPLETE CELIBACY FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE. THIS SENSE OF SELF-DISCIPLINE AND SACRIFICE WOULD STAND HIM IN GOOD STEAD FOR THE TASK AHEAD OF HIM.

AS SOON AS THE ZULU REBELLION WAS OVER, THE TRANSVAAL GOVERNMENT REWARDED THE INDIAN COMMUNITY FOR ITS SERVICE WITH A PROPOSAL-WITH A VERY HUMILIATING LAW. IT REQUIRED EVERY INDIAN TO TAKE OUT A REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE, GIVING, LIKE A CRIMINAL, HIS THUMB AND FINGER IMPRESSIONS ON THE APPLICATION. GANDHI CALLED A MEETING OF INDIANS IN JOHANNESBURG'S EMPIRE THEATRE.

LET US TAKE THIS PLEDGE; WE SOLEMNLY DECLARE, WITH GOD AS WITNESS, THAT WE WILL NEVER SUBMIT TO THIS HUMILIATING LAW.

GANDHI WAS THRILLED WITH PRIDE. HE ROSE AND SPOKE.

TO PLEDGE OURSELVES... IN THE NAME OF GOD OR WITH HIM AS WITNESS IS NOT SOMETHING TO BE TRIFLED WITH... EVERYONE MUST BE TRUE TO HIS PLEDGE, EVEN UNTO DEATH, NO MATTER WHAT OTHERS DO. EVEN IF ALL OTHERS GO BACK ON THE PLEDGE AND I AM LEFT ALONE, I WILL DIE, BUT NEVER SUBMIT TO THE LAW.

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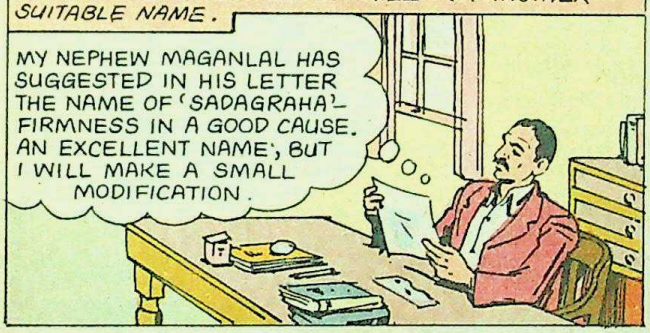
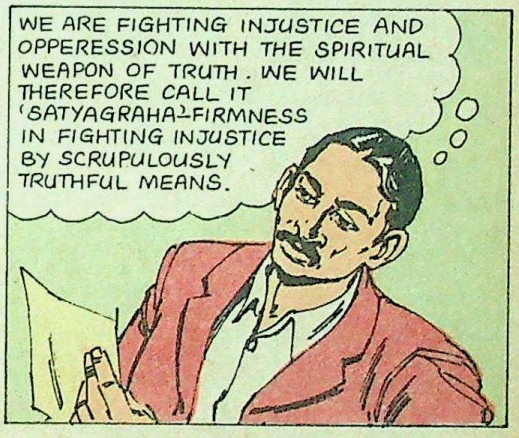
A THRILL WENT THROUGH EVERY MAN IN THE HALL. THIS WAS THE VOICE OF A GENERAL CALLING HIS TROOPS TO A NEW KIND OF WAR. THEY ROSE TO A MAN.

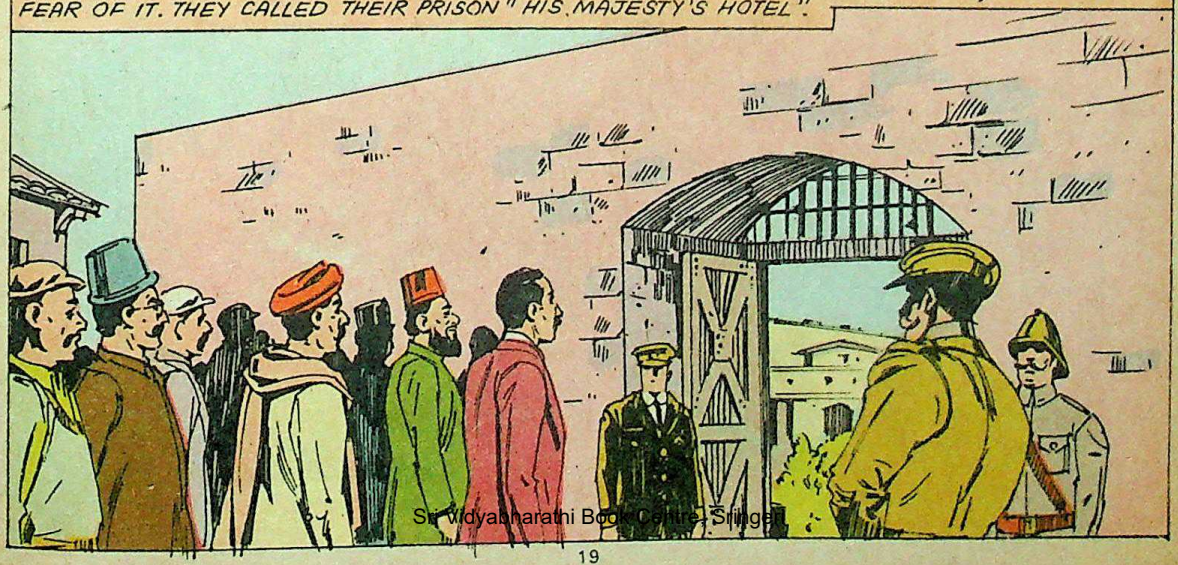
A NEW FORCE IN HUMAN HISTORY WAS BORN ON THIS 11 TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 1906. IN LESS THAN FIFTY YEARS, IT WAS TO FREE INDIA FROM THE IMPERIAL RULE OF BRITAIN, AND THEN, ONE AFTER-ANOTHER, THE OTHER COUNTRIES OF ASIA AND AFRICA HELD IN BONDAGE BY EUROPEAN COLONIAL POWERS.

THIS STRUGGLE WAS CALLED 'PASSIVE RESISTANCE'. BUT GANDHI DID NOT LIKE THE PHRASE. IT DID NOT EXPRESS THE ACTIVE MORAL POWER OF THE NEW WEAPON. HE ADVERTISED A PRIZE FOR ANOTHER SUITABLE NAME.





THE NEW LAW WAS PASSED IN MARCH 1907. THE SATYAGRAHA AGAINST IT COMMENCED IN JULY. THE MAJORITY OF INDIANS REFUSED TO APPLY FOR THE CERTIFICATES. LEADING INDIANS, INCLUDING GANDHI, WERE JAILED. BUT NO ONE WEAKENED IN HIS RESOLVE. INDIANS, PREVIOUSLY FRIGHTENED BY THE VERY WORD 'JAIL', HAD, INSPIRED BY GANDHI, LOST ALL FEAR OF IT. THEY CALLED THEIR PRISON "HIS MAJESTY'S HOTEL".



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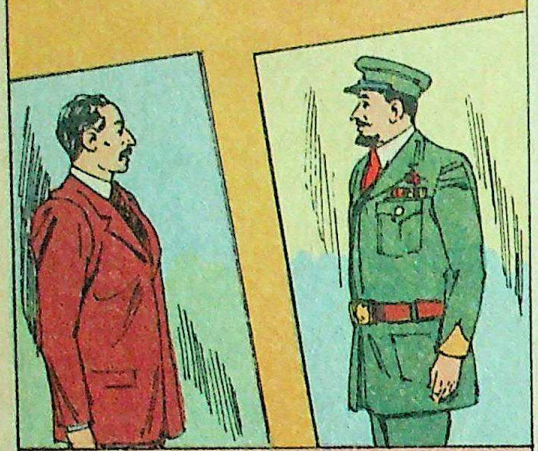
GANDHI WON THIS FIRST BATTLE OF HIS NONVIOLENT FIGHT. GENERAL SMUTS, THE HOME MINISTER, ACCEPTED THE OFFER GANDHI HAD MADE BEFORE STARTING THE SATYAGRAHA...



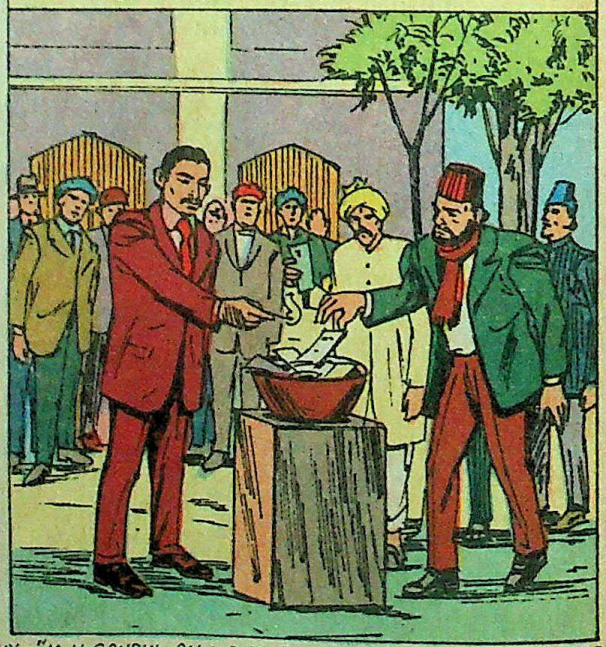
...THAT THE INDIANS WOULD VOLUNTARILY TAKE OUT THE NEW REGISTRATION CERTIFICATES, AND GIVE THEIR FINGER IMPRESSIONS IF THEY WERE NOT FORCED TO DO SO BY A LAW.

MANY INDIANS DID NOT LIKE THE COMPROMISE. THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VOLUNTARY AND COMPULSORY REGISTRATION. ONE OF THEM, A PATHAN CLIENT OF GANDHI, NAMED MIR ALAM, ASSAULTED GANDHI AS GANDHI WAS GOING TO THE PERMIT OFFICE TO APPLY FOR THE CERTIFICATE.

BUT THIS TIME ALSO, GANDHI FOLLOWED THE LAW OF AHIMSA. HE WROTE TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAYING THAT HIS ASSAILANTS SHOULD NOT BE PROSECUTED.

THE WOUNDED GANDHI WAS TAKEN BY A NOBLE MISSIONARY, JOSEPH DOKE*, TO HIS HOUSE AND NURSED WITH LOVING CARE. AT GANDHI'S REQUEST HIS LITTLE DAUGHTER, OLIVE, SANG GANDHI'S FAVOURITE ENGLISH HYMN BY CARDINAL NEWMAN.

LIKE SOME INDIANS, MANY EUROPEANS ALSO DID NOT LIKE THE COMPROMISE. UNDER PRESSURE FROM THEM, SMUTS DID NOT REPEAL THE REGISTRATION ACT IN THE MANNER GANDHI AND HIS INDIAN SUPPORTERS WANTED. IN PROTEST, THE INDIANS WHO HAD TAKEN OUT THE VOLUNTARY CERTIFICATES MADE A BONFIRE OF THEM.



* THE NEXT YEAR, IN 1909, HE WROTE GANDHI'S FIRST BIOGRAPHY- "M.K. GANDHI, AN INDIAN PATRIOT IN SOUTH AFRICA".— REPRINTED IN INDIA BY THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

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THE SECOND SATYAGRAHA WENT ON FOR THREE YEARS. THE SATYAGRAHI PRISONERS WERE TREATED VERY HARSHLY; MADE TO BREAK STONES, DIG FIELDS AND CLEAN LATRINES.

BUT SATYAGRAHIS' SPIRIT REMAINED UNBROKEN.

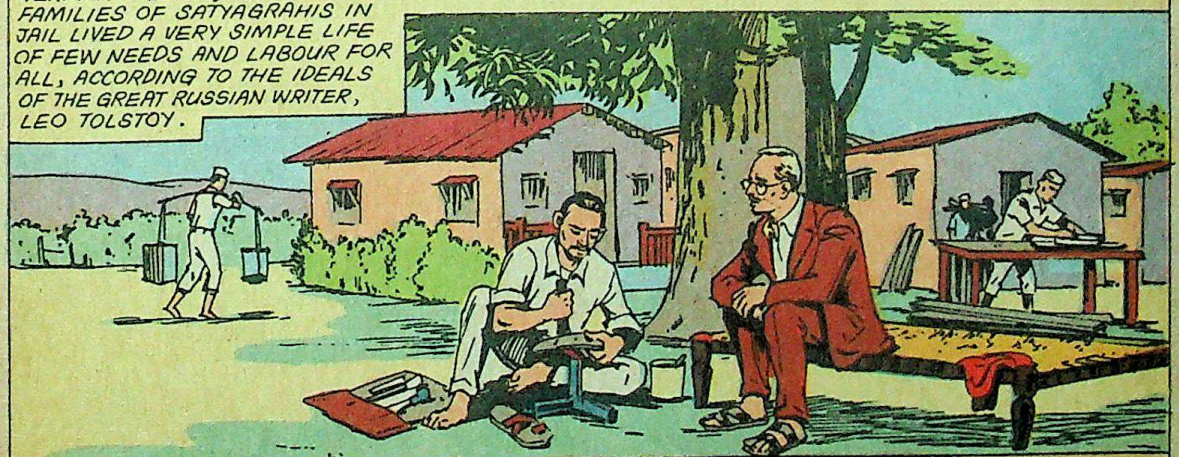
EVEN GANDHI WAS NOT SPARED; HE WAS KEPT FOR SOME TIME IN A DARK, NARROW, SOLITARY CELL, AND ASKED TO DO HARD LABOUR.

GANDHI BORE IT ALL WITHOUT ILL-WILL OR ANGER. LATER IN INDIA, HIS PRISONER'S CAP, WITH CHANGES, WOULD BECOME THE NATIONAL KHADI "GANDHI CAP".

WHILE GANDHI WAS IN PRISON, KASTURBA FELL ILL. HE WROTE TO HER FROM JAIL —

I AM VERY MUCH GRIEVED, BUT I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO GO THERE TO NURSE YOU... I CAN COME ONLY IF I PAY THE FINE WHICH I MUST NOT DO... I LOVE YOU SO DEARLY THAT EVEN IF YOU ARE DEAD, YOU WILL BE ALIVE TO ME... IF YOU DIE, YOUR DEATH ALSO WILL BE A SACRIFICE TO THE CAUSE OF SATYAGRAHA.

GANDHI WAS LATER RELEASED, THOUGH THE SATYAGRAHA CONTINUED. GANDHI STARTED ANOTHER ASHRAM IN THE TRANSVAAL CALLED TOLSTOY FARM, ON A LARGE PIECE OF LAND BOUGHT BY A GERMAN FRIEND, HERMAN KALLENBACH. ON THIS FARM, GANDHI WITH HIS WHOLE FAMILY AND THE FAMILIES OF SATYAGRAHIS IN JAIL LIVED A VERY SIMPLE LIFE OF FEW NEEDS AND LABOUR FOR ALL, ACCORDING TO THE IDEALS OF THE GREAT RUSSIAN WRITER, LEO TOLSTOY.



LATER IN LIFE, GANDHI REMEMBERED THE TWO AND A HALF YEARS ON TOLSTOY FARM, WITH ITS DISCIPLINE OF DAILY LABOUR, AS THE HAPPIEST PERIOD IN HIS LIFE. OUT OF THIS EXPERIENCE, GREW GANDHI'S FAMOUS SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM.

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THE SECOND SATYAGRAHA HAD BEEN SUSPENDED IN MAY 1911, WHEN GENERAL SMUTS ASSURED GANDHI THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD MEET THE DEMANDS OF THE INDIANS. BUT GENERAL SMUTS DID NOT KEEP THE ASSURANCE HE HAD GIVEN TO GANDHI, AND THE THIRD AND LAST SATYAGRAHA IN SOUTH AFRICA STARTED IN SEPTEMBER 1913. THIS TIME, WOMEN SINGING DEVOTIONAL SONGS ALSO JOINED THE SATYAGRAHA...

LET NOT THY MIND BE AFFECTED BY JOY OR SORROW...

... WITH KASTURBA HERSELF GOING TO JAIL.

DURING THIS SATYAGRAHA, GANDHI HAD INCLUDED A NEW DEMAND THAT THE HEAVY, UNJUST TAX OF THREE POUNDS PER YEAR, WHICH INDENTURED LABOURERS SETTLED IN NATAL HAD TO PAY, SHOULD BE REMOVED. SO THE LABOURERS IN THE COAL-MINES ALSO JOINED THE STRUGGLE. THEY STRUCK WORK AND LEFT THE MINES WITH THEIR FAMILIES AND BELONGINGS. GANDHI LED THEM ALL, MORE THAN TWO THOUSAND IN NUMBER, IN A PEACEFUL MARCH FROM NATAL TO TRANSVAAL, WHICH INDIANS OUTSIDE COULD NOT ENTER.

GANDHI WAS ARRESTED.

AFTER GANDHI'S ARREST, THE GOVERNMENT TRIED TO BREAK THE STRIKE. THE LABOURERS WERE FLOGGED, SHOT AT, AND ASSAULTED BY MOUNTED POLICE.

THERE WAS AN OUTCRY IN INDIA. GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE AROUSED STRONG PUBLIC OPINION IN SUPPORT OF THE SATYAGRAHIS AND EVEN THE VICEROY, LORD HARDINGE, PUBLICLY CONDEMNED THE REPRESSION.

WHEN GANDHI, AFTER HIS RELEASE, HEARD OF THE SUFFERINGS OF THE LABOURERS, HE DISCARDED HIS USUAL DRESS AND FOR SOME TIME ADOPTED A MOURNING DRESS OF A LOINCLOTH AND KURTA, AND SHAVED HIS HEAD.

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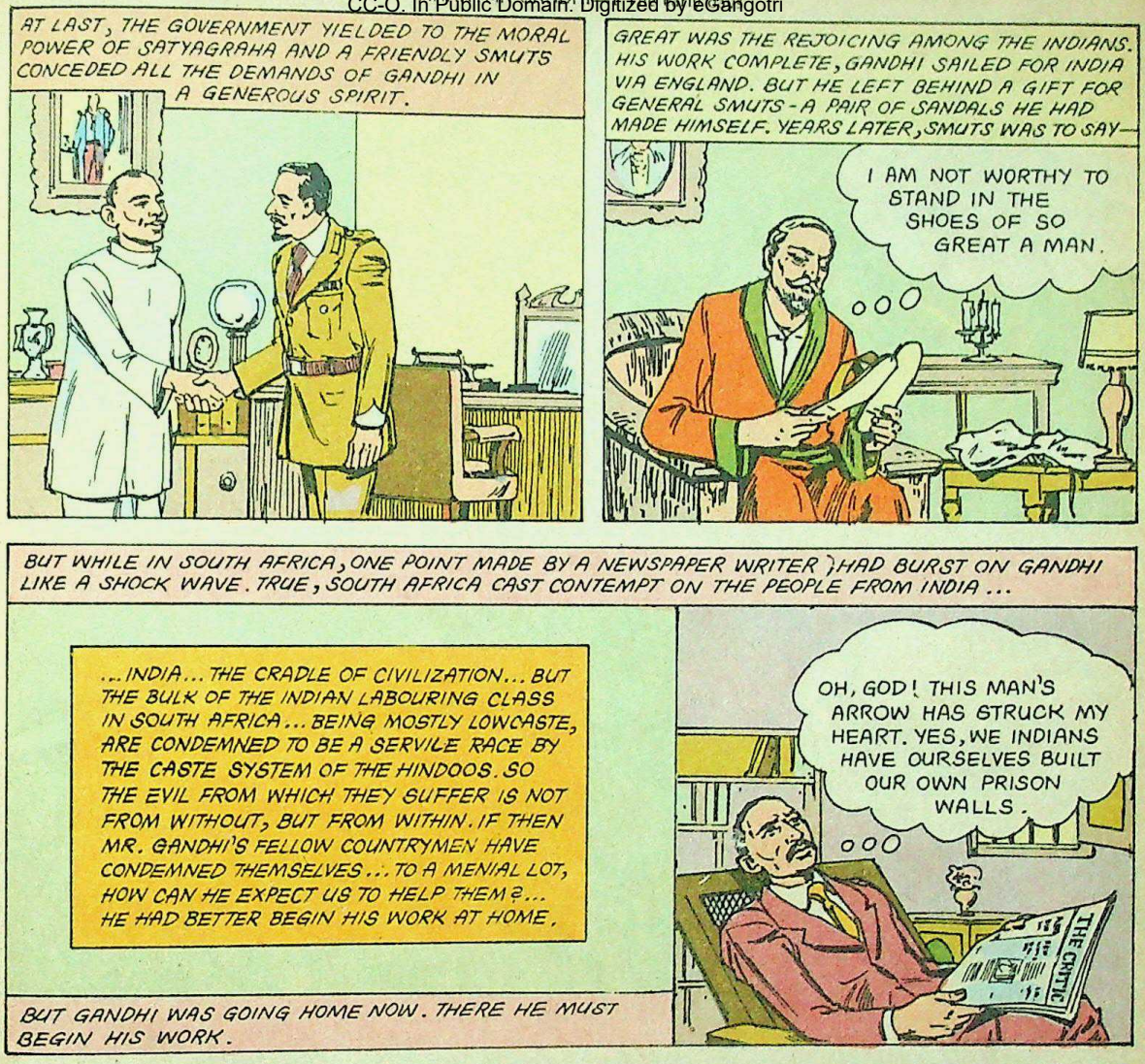

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amar chitra katha
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SO FOR THE FIRST YEAR, GANDHI, WITH KASTURBA, TRAVELLED WIDELY THROUGH THE COUNTRY. HE SAW AND LIKED THE PEOPLE'S SIMPLICITY OF NATURE AND LIVING HABITS.

BUT HE ALSO SAW THEIR IGNORANCE AND THEIR INDIFFERENCE TO CLEANLINESS.

HE SAW THE FEAR AND HATRED OF THE RULERS AMONG EDUCATED YOUTH.

ABOVE ALL, HE SAW THE POVERTY OF THE MASSES.

WHILE TOURING, GANDHI SET UP IN MAY 1915, AN ASHRAM AT KOCHARAB, A VILLAGE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF AHMEDABAD ON THE WESTERN BANK OF THE RIVER SABARMATI. HE NAMED IT "SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM". THE SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE ASHRAM DEDICATED THEMSELVES TO THE SERVICE OF THE COUNTRY AND TOOK EIGHT VOWS TO MAKE THEMSELVES FIT FOR IT.

I SHALL STAND FIRMLY BY TRUTH, AHIMSA, BRAHMACHARYA, CONTROL OF THE PALATE, NON-STEALING, NON-POSSESSION, SWADESHI AND FEARLESSNESS, AND STAND AGAINST UNTOUCHABILITY.

ALSO, THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ASHRAM MADE PHYSICAL LABOUR COMPULSORY FOR ALL, "AS A DUTY IMPOSED BY NATURE UPON MANKIND."

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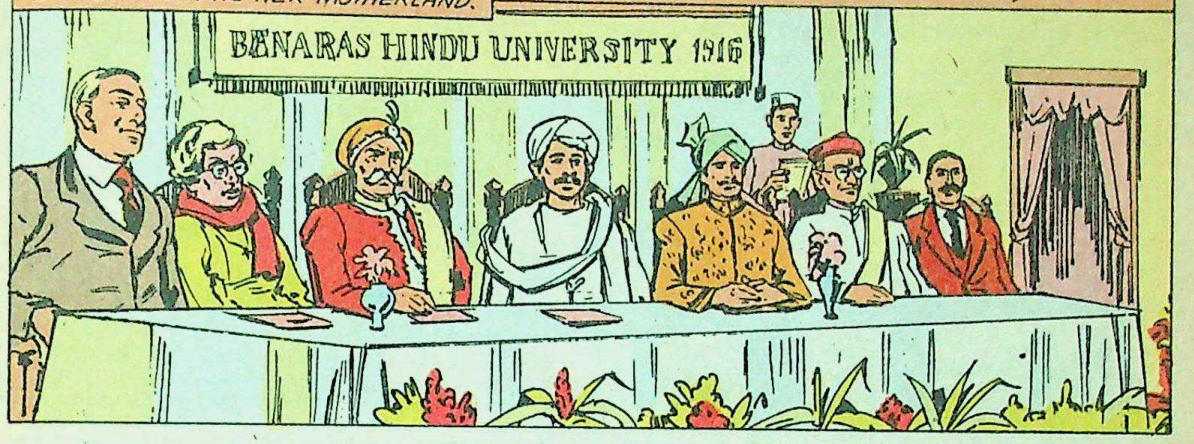
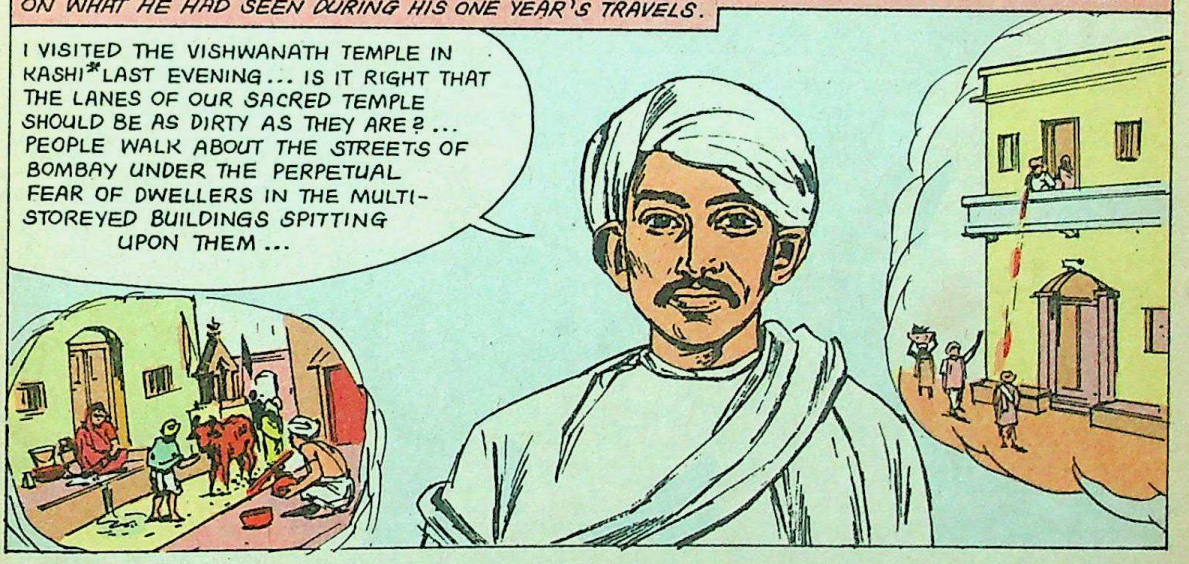
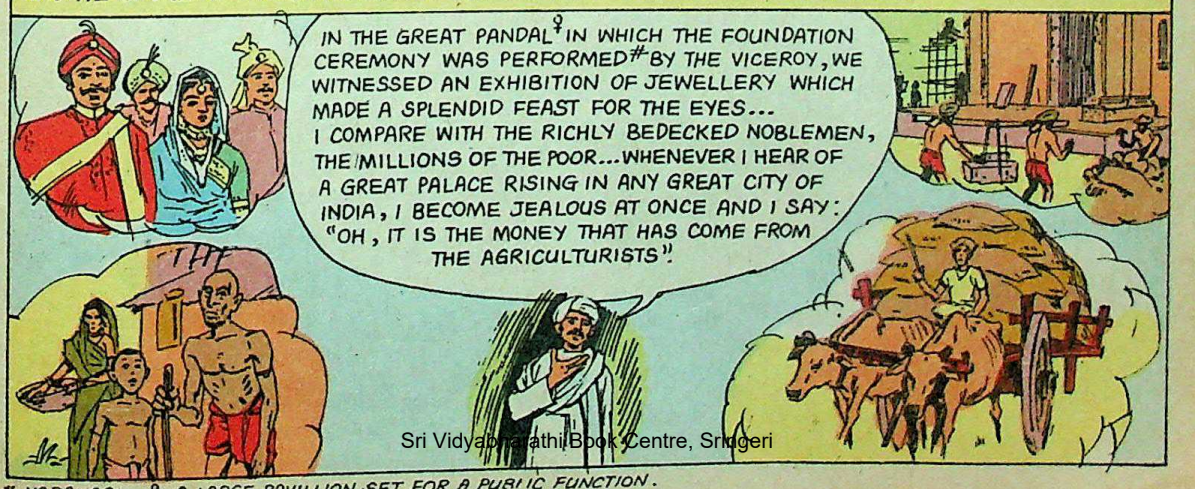
AS SOON AS HIS YEAR OF POLITICAL SILENCE WAS OVER, GANDHI WENT TO WORK. THE OCCASION: THE CELEBRATIONS IN FEBRUARY 1916, OF THE BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY FOUNDED BY PANDIT MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA WITH THE HELP OF THE BRITISH THEOSOPHIST, MRS. ANNIE BESANT, WHO HAD ADOPTED INDIA AS HER MOTHERLAND.



INVITED TO ADDRESS THE STUDENTS, GANDHI POURED OUT HIS HEART IN A PASSIONATE SPEECH ON WHAT HE HAD SEEN DURING HIS ONE YEAR'S TRAVELS.



AND HE SPOKE OF THE EXTREMES OF LUXURY AND POVERTY IN THE COUNTRY.



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* VARANASI ♀ A LARGE PAVILLION SET FOR A PUBLIC FUNCTION.
# ON FEBRUARY 4TH.

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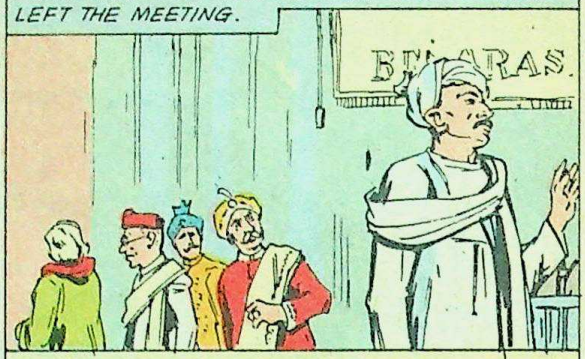
AND FINALLY, HE SPOKE OF THE ANARCHIST MOVEMENT SPREADING AMONG THE EDUCATED YOUTH IN THE COUNTRY.

I WOULD SAY TO THEM THAT THEIR ANARCHISM HAS NO ROOM IN INDIA IF INDIA IS TO CONQUER THE CONQUEROR. IT IS A SIGN OF FEAR... I HONOUR THE ANARCHIST FOR HIS BRAVERY IN BEING WILLING TO DIE FOR HIS COUNTRY: BUT I ASK HIM: IS KILLING HONOURABLE?

MRS. BESANT AND THE MAHARAJAS ON THE DAIS DID NOT LIKE GANDHI TALKING SO BOLDLY ABOUT ANARCHISM TO STUDENTS. THEY STOOD UP AND LEFT THE MEETING.



GANDHI ENDED HIS SPEECH ABRUPTLY AND THE MEETING BROKE UP IN CONFUSSION.

INDIA HEARD THIS FEARLESS VOICE AND KNEW THAT SOMEONE DIFFERENT HAD ENTERED THE SCENE. THE POET RABINDRANATH TAGORE GAVE HIM HIS PROPER NAME-MAHATMA, THE GREAT SOUL. AND THE POOR LOOKED UP TO HIM.

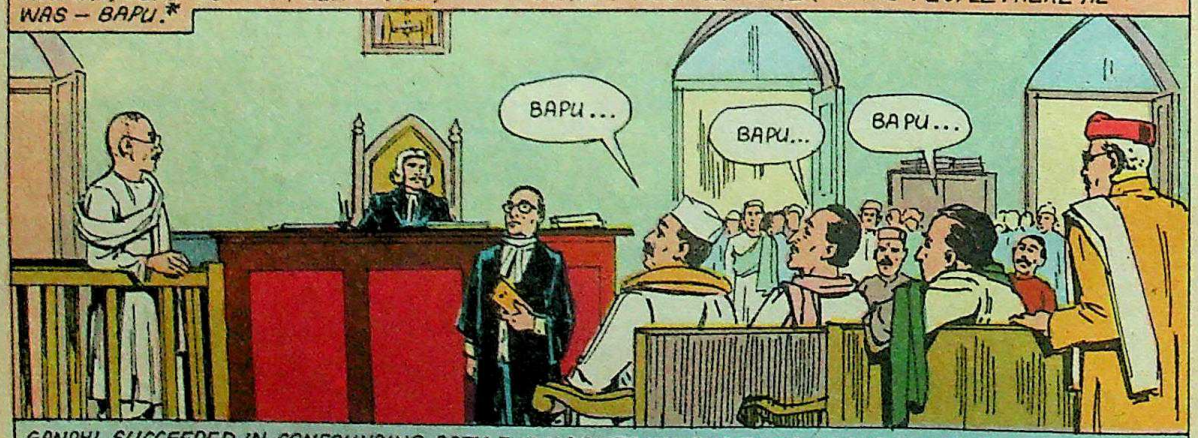
MAHATMAJI, I AM FROM CHAMPARAN DISTRICT, BIHAR. OUR ENGLISH LANDLORDS FORCED US TO GROW INDIGO. NOW THAT SYNTHETIC INDIGO HAS BEEN DISCOVERED THEY FORCE US TO PAY THEM COMPENSATION FOR NOT GROWING IT ANY LONGER. HELP US.

GANDHI WENT TO CHAMPARAN. THE GOVERNMENT ORDERED HIM TO LEAVE, WHICH HE REFUSED TO DO. HE WOULD INSTEAD GO WILLINGLY TO JAIL. THE NEWS SPREAD.

A LAWYER MAHATMA HAS COME, WHO IS GOING TO JAIL FOR OUR SAKE.

HE WANTS NOTHING FROM US; ONLY JUSTICE FOR US FROM THE ENGLISH.

AND THE VILLAGERS GATHERED IN CROWDS ROUND THE COURTHOUSE, STIRRED BY AN ANCIENT INDIAN MEMORY, DEAD NOW FOR CENTURIES, THAT A LEADER MUST BE FATHER TO HIS PEOPLE. HERE HE WAS – BAPU.*



GANDHI SUCCEEDED IN CONFOUNDING BOTH THE MAGISTRATE AND THE PLEADER AND WAS QUICKLY RELEASED. THEN QUIETLY, POLITELY, PAINSTAKINGLY, HE WORKED TO MAKE THE LANDLORDS RETURN PART OF WHAT THEY HAD FORCIBLY TAKEN FROM THE PEASANTS. HE HAD SHOWN THE PEASANTS, COWERING TILL NOW UNDER BRITISH AUTHORITY, THAT THEY NEED FEAR IT NO LONGER. IT WAS HERE THAT HE MET RAJENDRA PRASAD AND J.B. KRIPALANI.

* FATHER.

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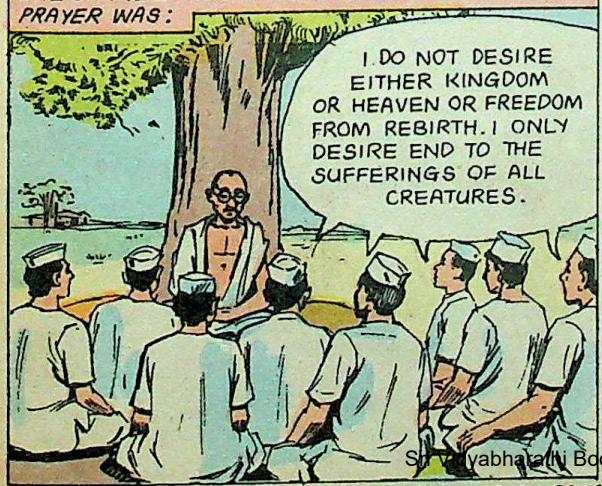
GANDHI ALSO BEGAN A PROGRAMME OF CLEANLINESS IN CHAMPARAN'S VILLAGES, SWEEPING, CLEARING, TEACHING THE VILLAGERS THAT THERE IS DIGNITY IN CLEANING UP OUR OWN DIRT.

CHAMPARAN TOO TAUGHT HIM SOMETHING—THAT THE ENGLISH, THOUGH BASICALLY JUST, MUST LEAVE INDIA. FOR IN ORDER TO RULE HER, THEY BROKE HER BACK.

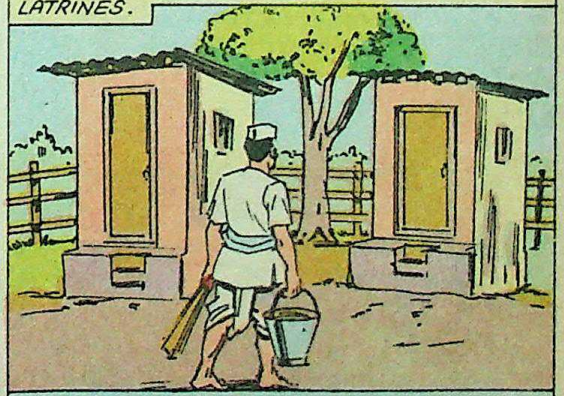
WHILE WORKING IN CHAMPARAN, GANDHI SHIFTED THE SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM FROM KOCHARAB TO ANOTHER SPOT TO THE NORTH, ALSO ON THE WESTERN BANK OF THE SABARMATI, CLOSE TO THE SABARMATI JAIL.

GANDHI HAD BEAUTIFIED HIS ASHRAM EVEN MORE—A FAMILY OF 'UNTOUCHABLES' OR 'HARIJANS' * AS HE ADDRESSED THEM LATER, HAD JOINED THE ASHRAM AT KOCHARAB AND NOW LIVED WITH HIM.

LIFE IN THE ASHRAM FOLLOWED A STRICT DISCIPLINE OF FIXED HOURS OF PRAYER, MORNING AND EVENING. ONE OF THE SANSKRIT VERSES IN THE MORNING PRAYER WAS:



THE ASHRAM MEMBERS ALSO DID SEVERAL HOURS OF MANUAL LABOUR; BESIDES SPINNING AND WEAVING, SCAVENGING AND CLEANING LATRINES.



THIS WAS GANDHI'S WAY OF TRAINING HIS NON-VIOLENT ARMY OF VOLUNTEERS TO FEEL ONE WITH THE LOWEST CLASS IN SOCIETY.

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* LITERALLY PEOPLE OF GOD, THE TERM FIRST USED BY RAMANUJACHARYA AND LATER NARSI MEHTA, BEFORE MAHATMA GANDHI.

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GANDHI NEXT TOOK UP THE CAUSE OF AHMEDABAD'S POORLY PAID MILL WORKERS WHO WERE ASKING FOR A RAISE IN WAGES. THEY PLEDGED TO CONTINUE THE STRIKE TILL THE MILL-OWNERS AGREED TO THE RAISE.

THE OWNERS STOOD FIRM. THE WORKERS BEGAN TO TIRE. GANDHI WAS UPSET; THEY MUST NOT GIVE UP NOW. HOW COULD HE CONVINCE THEM?

IT IS TO THEIR GOOD TO STAY UNITED. MY BELOVED BA USED TO FAST FOR OUR GOOD...

AND THE NEXT MOMENT—

FRIENDS, UNDER OUR EK TEK* TREE, I ANNOUNCE THIS: I SHALL NOT TOUCH FOOD BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT UNITED IN YOUR PLEDGE.

BAPU, NO! DO NOT DO THIS; NOT FOR OUR SAKE.

FOR THE FIRST TIME, THROUGH A FAST, THROUGH SELF-DENIAL, A LEADER WAS PLAYING A DEEPLY PERSONAL ROLE, OF PARENT TO HIS CHILDREN.

THIS FAST IS NOT TO BLACKMAIL THE MILL-OWNERS. I HAVE CLEARLY TOLD THEM THAT. IT IS FOR THE WELFARE OF THE WORKERS.

FINALLY, THE MILL-OWNERS RELENTED. IT WAS AS IF THEY HAD BEEN REMINDED THAT IT WAS ONLY A PATERNAL EMPLOYER WHO REALLY SUCCEEDED.

AFTER THIS CAME THE ISSUE OF THE CULTIVATORS OF KHEDA DISTRICT TO THE SOUTH-EAST OF AHMEDABAD. OWING TO EXCESSIVE RAIN DURING THE PREVIOUS MONSOON, THE CROPS HAD FALLEN BELOW THE NORMAL LEVEL.

THE PEOPLE DEMANDED THAT THE COLLECTION OF LAND REVENUE SHOULD BE POSTPONED TO THE NEXT YEAR. BUT THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT AGREE TO THIS.

GANDHI ADVISED THE CULTIVATORS NOT TO PAY THE LAND REVENUE. THE GOVERNMENT CONFISCATED THE CATTLE, THE HOUSEHOLD GOODS...

... AND EVEN THE STANDING CROPS IN THE FIELDS OF THOSE WHO DID NOT PAY.

* EK TEK – 'ONE PLEDGE'.

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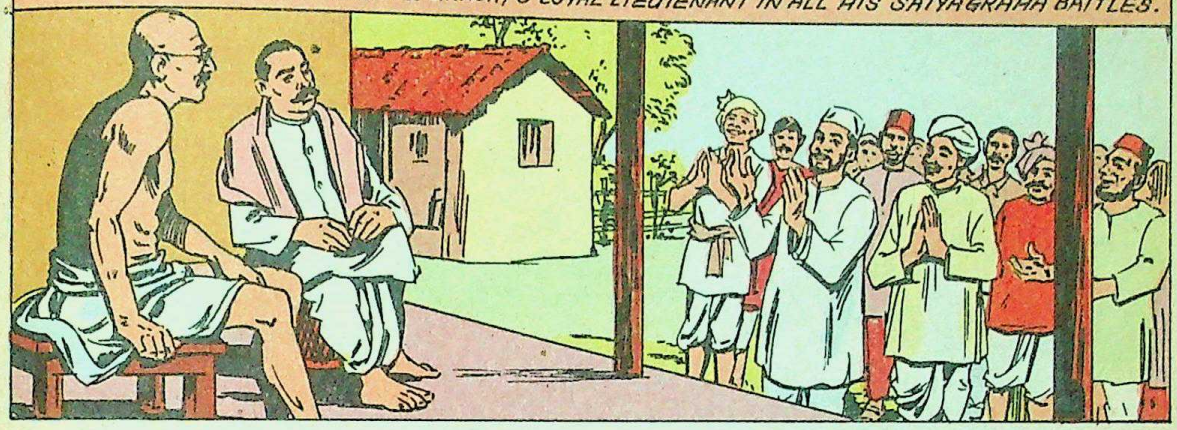
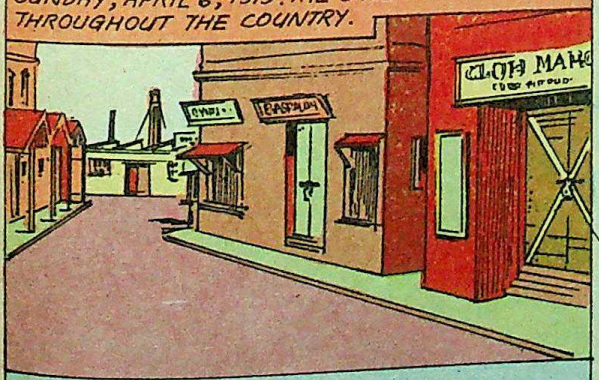
THIS RESULTED IN MUCH SUFFERING AMONG THE FARMERS, TILL, UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE VICEROY, THE GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY CHANGED ITS POLICY AND THE COLLECTOR OF KHEDA INFORMED GANDHI THAT THE CULTIVATORS WHO WERE TOO POOR TO PAY WOULD NOT BE FORCED TO DO SO. THE FIGHT WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE OF GUJARAT IN SATYAGRAHA, A LESSON IN COURAGE AND SELF-SACRIFICE. AND IT GAVE THEM A NEW LEADER, VALLABHBHAI PATEL WHO BECAME GANDHI'S LOYAL LIEUTENANT IN ALL HIS SATYAGRAHA BATTLES.



SOON AFTER THIS, ALTHOUGH LOKAMANYA TILAK WAS AGAINST IT, GANDHI HELPED ENGLAND RECRUIT SOLDIERS FOR WORLD WAR-I. THE MESSAGE WAS CLEAR- DO UNTO US AS WE DO UNTO YOU. INDIA WANTED HOME RULE IN FAIR EXCHANGE FOR HER WAR EFFORTS. BUT AT THE END OF THE WAR—

IN PROTEST, GANDHI TOOK HIS FIRST MAJOR POLITICAL STEP IN INDIA. HE CALLED FOR A NATION-WIDE SATYAGRAHA; A HARTAL. ALL SHOPS, BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS, MILLS AND FACTORIES WERE TO BE VOLUNTARILY CLOSED ON SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 1919. THE CALL WAS FOLLOWED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.



A NATION COMING PEACEFULLY TO A HALT WAS QUITE A SPECTACLE.

GANDHI WAS ARRESTED ON APRIL 9. AS A REACTION THERE WAS VIOLENCE IN SOME PLACES- DELHI, AMRITSAR, AHMEDABAD AND VIRAMGAM*. GANDHI WAS DEEPLY PAINED.

HE CALLED OFF THE SATYAGRAHA.

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* A TOWN NEAR AHMEDABAD.

amar chitra katha
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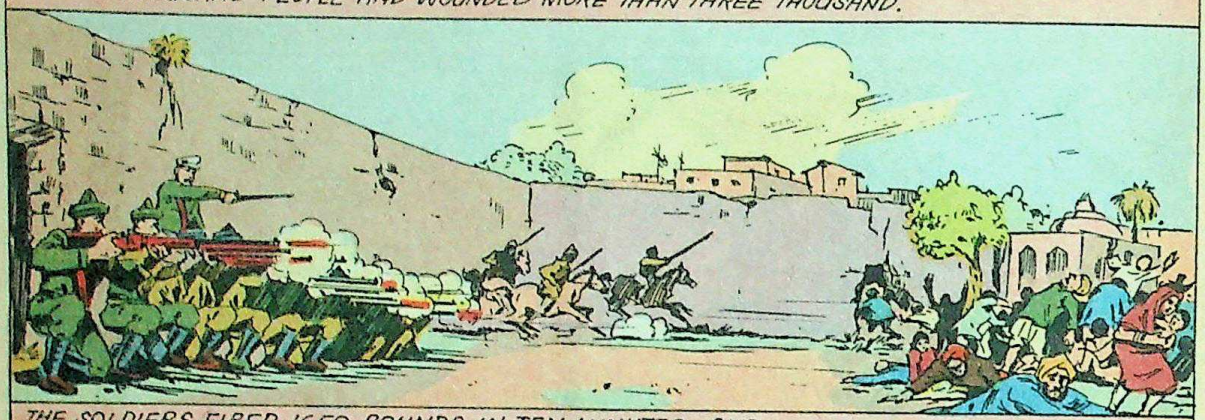
THEN CAME APRIL 13, BAISAKHI, AND THE MASSACRE AT JALLIANWALA BAGH IN AMRITSAR. AN ARMY OFFICER, GENERAL DYER, ANGERED BY THE KILLING OF SOME ENGLISHMEN IN THE CITY AND THE ASSAULT ON AN ENGLISHWOMAN ON THE 10TH BY AN EXCITED CROWD, WANTED TO PUNISH THE PEOPLE. UNDER HIS ORDERS SEPOYS FIRED ON AN UNARMED CROWD AND KILLED MORE THAN A THOUSAND* PEOPLE AND WOUNDED MORE THAN THREE THOUSAND.



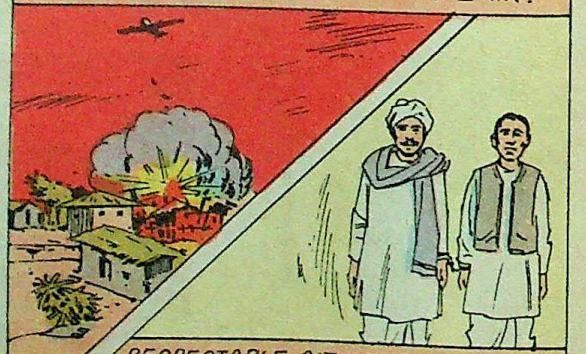
THE SOLDIERS FIRED 1650 ROUNDS IN TEN MINUTES, AND STOPPED ONLY WHEN THEY HAD NO MORE AMMUNITION.

ON APRIL 15, MARTIAL LAW WAS IMPOSED IN MANY PARTS OF THE PUNJAB. COLLEGE STUDENTS IN LAHORE WERE FORCED TO WALK SEVERAL MILES IN THE HOT SUN TO ATTEND COMPULSORY ROLL CALL TWICE A DAY.

SOME WERE FLOGGED IN PUBLIC.

AND THE PEOPLE PASSING THROUGH THE STREET IN WHICH THE ENGLISHWOMAN WAS ASSAULTED WERE FORCED TO CRAWL ON THEIR BELLIES.

ONE DISTRICT WAS BOMBED FROM THE AIR.



RESPECTABLE CITIZENS WERE ARRESTED WITHOUT WARRANT AND HANDCUFFED.

THE REIGN OF TERROR LASTED SIX WEEKS. BECAUSE OF THE MARTIAL LAW, FOR MANY DAYS, THE REST OF THE COUNTRY DID NOT KNOW WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN THE PUNJAB. BUT SLOWLY THE HORROR STORIES SPREAD, AND THE PEOPLE WERE SHOCKED.

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* THE BRITISH GAVE THE FIGURES AS 379 KILLED AND OVER 1,200 WOUNDED.

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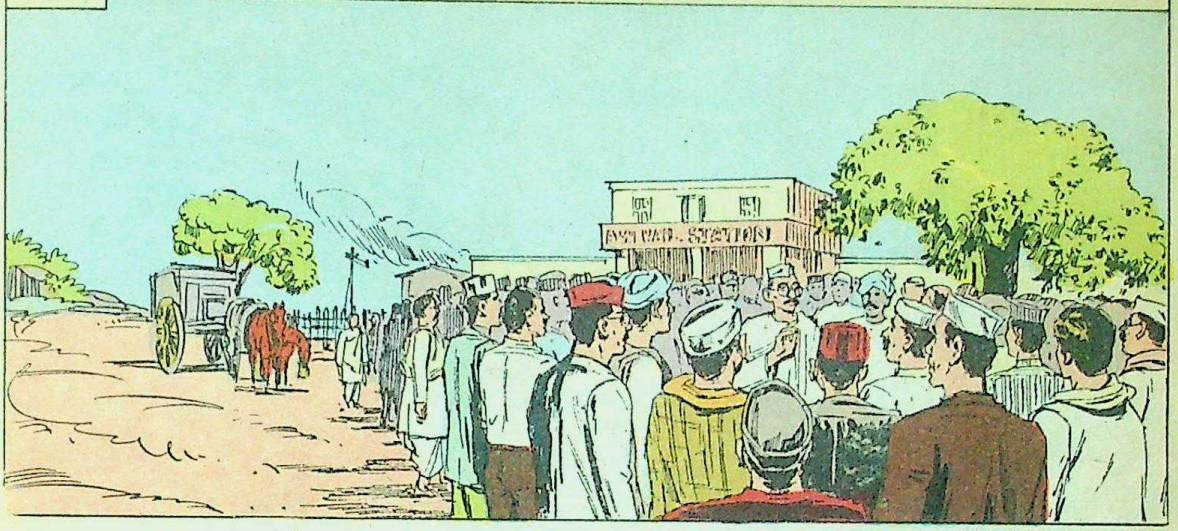
GANDHI WAS NOT ALLOWED TO GO TO PUNJAB FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. WHEN AT LAST HE WENT THERE IN OCTOBER, FIRST TO LAHORE AND THEN TO AMRITSAR, LARGE CROWDS WELCOMED HIM.



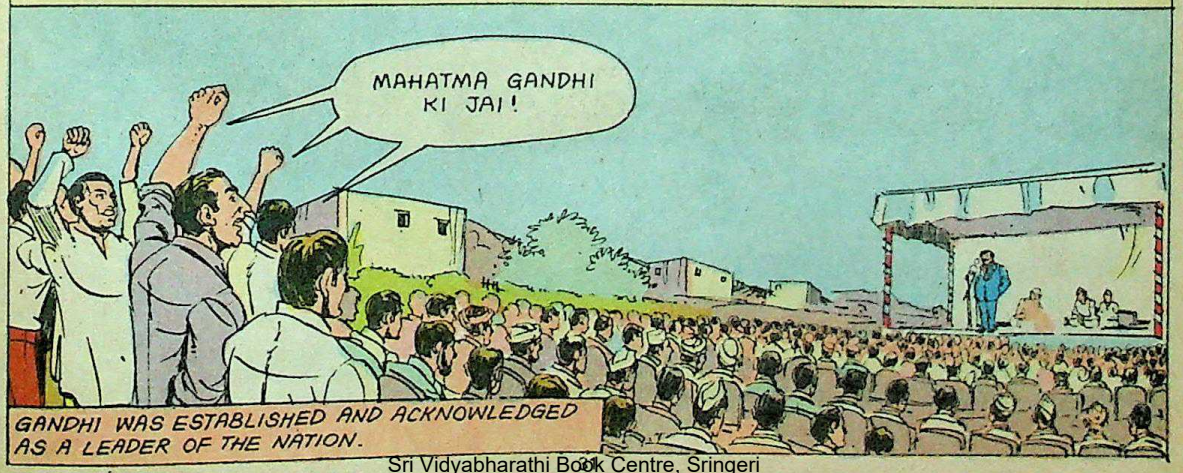
WRITING IN HIS MAGAZINE, NAVAJIVAN, GANDHI SAID —

PEOPLE WHO HAD SUFFERED MUCH, WASHED AWAY THEIR GRIEF WITH THE WATERS OF LOVE.

BUT SOON, IN DECEMBER 1919, KING GEORGE V MADE AN APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE OF INDIA AND HIS OFFICIALS IN THE GOVERNMENT.

GANDHI TRUSTED THE BRITISH AND WELCOMED THE PROPOSAL.

ON DECEMBER 29, AT THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS SESSION AT AMRITSAR, PRESIDED OVER BY MOTILAL NEHRU, A NEW SLOGAN BEGAN TO DOMINATE THE POLITICAL HORIZON.



GANDHI WAS ESTABLISHED AND ACKNOWLEDGED AS A LEADER OF THE NATION.

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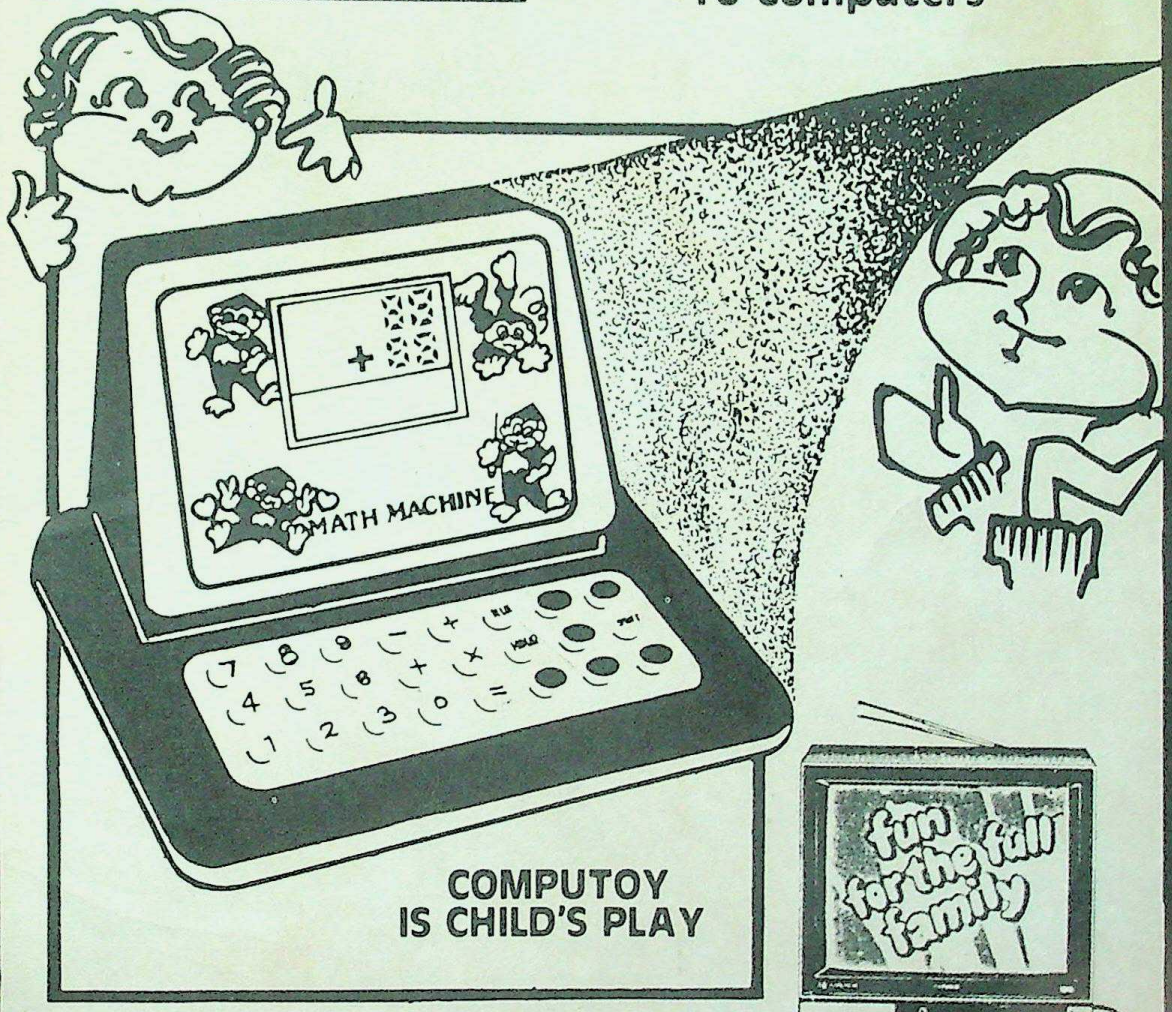

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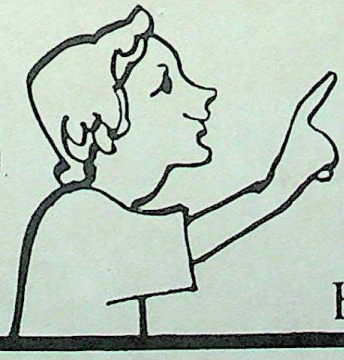

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